



BRITISH UNIMA CENTRE BULLETIN

EDITOR - ROBERT FOWLER

MARCH 1999

NO 100

Editorial

There would be no point in an organization like ours, in which the word international appears, having a publication which was not outward looking. However, this editor has few, if any, fixed ideas on what shape the *Bulletin* should assume, although he is willing to give writers more space – running a piece over more than one issue if need be – than they might ordinarily be accorded elsewhere. It can be as protean as its contributors make it, but, just in case members should not realize, I thought it worthwhile to repeat here that reviews are welcome, particularly of foreign shows, of course, but homegrown need not be parochial, and quality – whether at home or abroad – deserves recognition. There has in fact been quite a lot of puppetry on view of late: the London Festival of Puppetry for Adults at the Rosemary Branch Theatre; Kazuko Hohki's *Toothless* at the BAC; the London International Mime Festival; *Shockheaded Peter* and *Cinderella*, both at the Lyric Hammersmith; Joe Gladwin's paper *Cinderella* premiere at the BAC; the *Arabian Nights* at the Young Vic.... In some of these shows puppetry is central, in others not, but the increasing ability of puppetry to be "taken for granted" in the theatre, as just one of several ingredients, is anyway, it seems to me, a boon. You will no doubt spend much more time on analyzing Faulty Optic's *tunnelvision* than the use of a puppet in the Welsh National Opera's *Hansel and Gretel*, but it would still be interesting to hear how well or badly

the puppet is used in the latter. And yet, despite the theatrical feast that can be on the menu, little mail containing reviews is received. I cannot believe that members do not go to shows and do not have views thereupon.

Perhaps I am saying the obvious, but not everything needs strictly be about puppets, even if, clearly, most of what appears here will be. It was good, for example, to receive a few lines on an exhibition of drawings and paintings by Franciszka Themerson. There was not a single puppet or puppeteer, though there were quite a lot of musicians, depicted on the walls of the Cork St Gallery. However, she is very well known for the production of *Ubu* which she designed for Meschke in 1964 (she was made a Member of Honour of UNIMA in 1976), and, in my view, it is interesting to be made aware of the range of makers' work. Short as well as long items are welcome.

The last *Newsletter* encouraged readers to go and see "Grinling Gibbons and the Art of Carving" at the Victoria and Albert Museum. It would have been pleasing to have received a review of it. There was not a puppet in sight there either, though – as an angler – I particularly relished the exceedingly fine fish, fowl, and crustaceans of the Kirtlington Panels, but this was surely something (there was even a cabinet packed with tools, and technical data) a puppet carver could cast an appreciative eye over. It was interesting to learn that this artist who seems so much a part of our



The Scissorman from *Shockheaded Peter*

tradition was, while of English parentage, born in Rotterdam (1648) and remained on the continent throughout his apprenticeship. This makes a lot of sense when you have even a little familiarity with the continental tradition of limewood sculpture.

My thanks, as always, to contributors, and just in case this editorial should be thought a little schoolmasterly, let me say that I believe in the pleasure principle, and much enjoyment in puppetry is, I believe, recorded by contributors to these pages (admittedly, occasionally enhanced, it would seem, by alcohol). I would only wish that more of you would share *your* pleasure.

Non-Ex Cathedra Remarks

Ray DaSilva

For those who like numbers, we have just held BrUNIMA's 35th annual members' meeting and are now in the 70th year of UNIMA. More about the AGM in the next *Newsletter* but just enough space here to say a big THANK YOU to the Puppet Centre for hosting the event so marvellously. You may also have noticed that this is the 100th issue of our Bulletin, and as usual, Robert Fowler has come up trumps again with a fine array of internationally-based articles. I know that some of you are rather modest and need much cajoling in order to extract these contributions and also that we are all very busy, nevertheless, both the *Bulletin* and the *Newsletter* received praise from members at the AGM, and were cited by some as the reason for joining the organisation, so do please keep your contributions coming.

The other thing for which we need your help is the National Directory of Puppets and Related Materials in museums. This project, in case you haven't noticed, is being undertaken by all the national puppeteers' organisations. We have already had response from a few members (one member has covered 40 Scottish museums). Please report to Douglas Hayward – whether there are puppets or not in your local museum. If there are, then please provide brief details. If

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there are other puppeteers living in your town, then a simple phone call to them or Douglas will ascertain whether or not they have got there before you. Douglas' telephone number is 01283 840348.

We are now in the final year of the current Committee, elections will be held in November. It would be good to have some new blood, so if you are interested please let me, or any Committee member know, as we may be able to coopt you on to the current Committee, so that you can find out how we tick. To remind you, the present Committee consists of: Meg Amsden, Cariad Astles, Glyn Edwards, Robert Fowler, Penny Francis, Anna Ingleby, Martin MacGilp, Rachel Riggs, and Lorraine von Gehlen.

The 1999 stamp for your membership card should be included with this *Bulletin*.

If it is missing, then it is because our records show that your 1999 subscription has not been received. To maintain your membership, see instructions on the enclosed final reminder.

New Individual Members

Karin Andrews	Carshalton
Alison Conti	Felixtowe
Joe Gladwin	London
Stephanie Green	Carno, Powys
Jane Henderson	Isleworth
Victor Lindegrine	Whitstable
Steve Newton	Okehampton
Jane Paterson	Honiton
Kirsten Streitberger	Exmouth
Rebekah Wild	London

New Groups

On The Other Hand	London
Treasure Trove	Mold

New Overseas subscribers

Dennis Murphy	Australia
Birgitta Robinger	Sweden

The Theatre State

Peter Weir's *The Year of Living Dangerously*, set in Java in 1965, when the nationalist President Sukarno was overthrown by the military amid great carnage, was shown on television just before Christmas. A *wayang kulit* show forms the background as the opening credits roll and puppets feature significantly later. Their



symbolism within the film is made explicit when Billy Kwan (Linda Hunt) explains to the newly arrived Australian radio journalist Guy Hamilton (Mel Gibson) the roles played by Prince Arjuna, Krishna, and

Semar in the shadow play. Hamilton: "What does he [Semar] do?" Kwan: "He serves the prince." Semar is said explicitly by (the diminutive) Kwan to be a dwarf: Kwan is Semar to Hamilton's Arjuna. Semar, who, like the other *panakawan* (clown-servants), is not in the Indian epics, is in fact a native god (Ismaya) who possesses a whole compendium of deformities and is androgynous in nature. This latter aspect being particularly interesting in the context of the film, for – whether the conceit is intended or not – Kwan/Semar is played by a woman *en travesti*. Arjuna, the third of the Pandawa brothers in the Mahabharata, is very handsome as well as brave. The part of the British Embassy's Jill Bryant (Sigourney Weaver) is not, as I recall, defined in *wayang* terms, but she, like princesses and maidservants alike in the epic, falls for this *homme fatal*.

The film's title goes back to President Sukarno's National Day Speech, 1964, "A Year of Living Dangerously." (Indonesian, incidentally, suffers from dreadful acronymitis – even native speakers can have difficulty understanding their daily newspaper – and Sukarno's rhetoric abounded in such, the above notion being compressed into the macaronic acronym *tavip*, comprising *tahun* (the Indonesian for "year") and *vivere pericoloso*.)

Continuing the linguistic theme, I should like to quote the conclusion of Elizabeth Lind's article "The Rhetoric of Sukarno" (in *Indonesia and Malaysia – Scandinavian studies in contemporary society*, edited by T Svensson and Per Sørensen, Curzon Press, 1983):

"I have argued that in validating his charisma Sukarno modelled his speeches on the Javanese wayang play, its structure, and its rhetoric. This lay close at hand as in the traditional Javanese society the wayang play served as a vehicle for disseminating political messages. President Suharto, who lacks Sukarno's charismatic appeal and who is a less skilled orator, continues to use wayang

for political purposes. Within the framework of *Repelita* (Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun) 'The Five Year Development Programme', that was started in 1969, Suharto summoned dhalangs from Java, Madura, Sumatra (those were exiled Javanese), and Bali to Jakarta for a briefing. In his speech to the dhalangs he echoes Sukarno. The dhalangs, he was convinced, wanted to take part in the Indonesian People's fight for achieving 'a just and prosperous society.' In order to reach this goal the consciousness of the Indonesian People had to be awakened. The dhalang's task must be to stimulate and arouse the People's consciousness. He concludes:

'I am convinced that you Dalangs without changes in your presentation of the *lakons* [plays] and without altering the structure of the *pakem* [the outline of the plot] will be able to insert that which should be forwarded to the people. This could be done in the jokes or wherever you want to insert it. The important thing is that [the message] should be understood by as many as possible.'

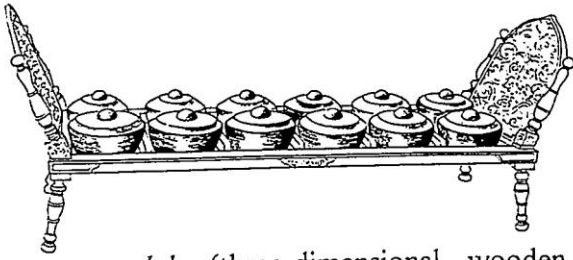
PS: The first time I became aware of a Javanese connection to Henri Cartier-Bresson was some years ago, when watching a television programme about the Magnum photographic agency, which he founded, during which he was interviewed in his home, where *wayang kulit* were displayed. Since then I have noticed some Indonesian photographs by him, a couple of Balinese dance photographs indeed were to be seen in the just-ended Victoria and Albert Museum exhibition celebrating his 90th birthday. His first wife, Ratna Mohini, came from Java, and he campaigned with her at the United Nations in 1947 for Indonesian independence from Dutch rule. He devoted special attention to the Barong dance of Bali, which also fascinated Antonin Artaud. I have not, though, seen Cartier-Bresson's book on Balinese dance, published in 1954, which is no doubt a collector's item. Has he taken any photographs of *wayang*?

The Golden Sword – Stamford Raffles and the East

It is quite likely that if the name Raffles were mentioned, gentleman burglar and/or a hotel wherein the likes of Somerset Maugham and Noel Coward sipped Singapore Slings would be the response. EW Hornung's creation is beside the point, the Raffles Hotel (albeit not established until 61 years after the death of the bearer of that name) does at least have the merit of commemorating Sir Stamford (knighted 1817), whose founding of that island state was just one of many splendid achievements in his admirable, albeit short, life (1781-1826). That lifetime's work is currently being fittingly marked (until 18 April) in the Ethnographic Department's first exhibition in its new home in the British Museum.

Stamford Raffles, a man of very scant formal education, contributed to many spheres of knowledge. As the humane, enlightened, and insubordinate (to the great annoyance of his employer, the East India Company) Lieutenant-Governor of Java (1811-1815), for example, he was to fix – through his collecting and his writing – our persisting ideas of Java, namely, shadow puppets, musical instruments, masks, stone carvings, and cloth. I shall deal here only with puppets and, to some extent, music.

The Raffles puppets are not unknown: Jeune Scott-Kemball wrote *Javanese shadow puppets*, a 65-page pamphlet on the Raffles shadow puppets, in 1970 (a British Museum publication long out of print, although copies do occasionally turn up). However, the opportunity to see them has been very limited. (It will also be relatively limited after the exhibition, which is why you should not fail to go now: there are plans to display parts of the Raffles Collection permanently within the British Museum, but – for conservation reasons – only some puppets, on a rotational basis, will be exhibited.) There are, according to Scott-Kemball, 283 *wayang kulit* and 80 accessories in the Collection. There are other types of puppets

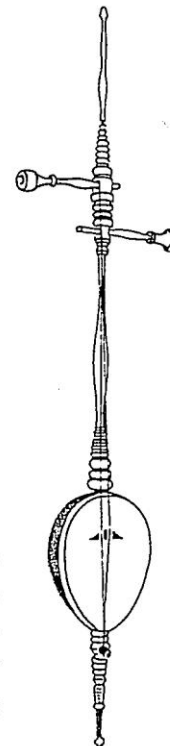


too – *golek* (three-dimensional wooden puppets), and *keruchill/klitik* (flat wooden puppets) – and these are all represented, in very healthy numbers, in the exhibition.

The *wayang kulit*, which come from Central Java, are interesting by virtue of their age – they were acquired between 1811 and 1816, and some may be much older – and their high level of craftsmanship – they are working puppets and bear characteristic signs of wear, tear, and repair (sometimes disguised by having their “best side” on display in the cases), but the colours, to cite Scott-Kemball, “generally present a brilliant and crisp appearance.” You can also see *wayang golek* and *keruchil*, but most interesting and intriguing of all (although underplayed – on the understandable grounds that the exhibition is intended for the public at large) is a unique type of small (no more than about 30cm tall) three-dimensional wooden puppet. The uniqueness of these puppets (see photograph in current *Animations*, Feb/Mar), of which 21 are on display, is that, while they resemble *wayang golek* in their three-dimensionality, they differ from them in that the clothing is carved (which, incidentally, provides information on early *batik* design) rather than being made of fabric. The caption reads “many show signs of once having been carefully labelled and numbered.” Sadly, the absence of this information (the Raffles Collection has had a chequered past in the British Museum’s hands, including woeful neglect and splitting up) leaves us completely in the dark as to how they were performed. Were they forerunners of *golek*? We do not know. It should be said that, while the curator, Nigel Barley, contends that they are “obviously puppets,” the Wayang Museum in Jakarta, which has nothing like them in its holdings, contests this. Professional jealousy? For the ordinary visitor, seeing them as puppets is, it

must be said, not helped by the lack of any indication, either in the exhibition or in the accompanying book, that the figures have had their original (central) spike removed and a display base fitted. Much investigative work still remains to be done with all the puppets in the Collection.

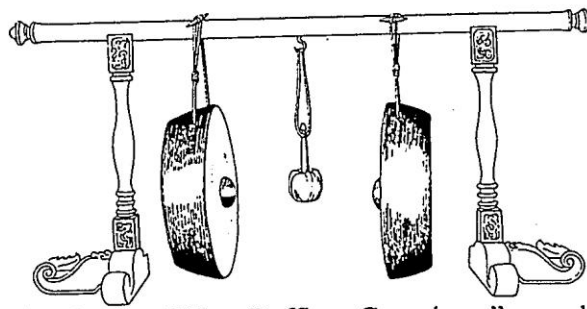
The range of puppets on display usefully informs or reminds viewers that *wayang purwa*, the stories of the Mahabharata and Ramayana, is, despite its preeminence, not the only tradition, and I should advise anyone wishing to become (more) acquainted with the mediaeval East Javanese romances of the Princes Panji and Damarwulan to consult Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof’s *Dictionary of Traditional South-East Asian Theatre* (Oxford in Asia Paperback, 1994, ISBN: 967-65-3032-8). This is a first-rate book, whose only, minor, defect is that it classifies the bulk of entries under vernacular names. A further, more general recommendation – sources not specifically about puppetry can be immensely valuable – would include the work of the Oxford historian Peter Carey. His *The British in Java 1811-1816 – A Javanese Account* is a wonderful edition of a *babad* (diary chronicle) kept by Panular, a minor member of the Yogya royal house. The immensely detailed and erudite *Historical Notes and Commentary* are a cornucopia of information on the practices and mores of the period, including *wayang*. Insight into the important role played by *dhalangs* is also afforded by dipping into Dr Carey’s paper “The Cultural Ecology of Early Nineteenth Century Java.” Reading of his short essay “Core and Periphery, 1600-1830: Pasisir Origins of Central Javanese ‘High Court’ Culture” also helps redress a certain prevailing historical misreading of Javanese culture. He concludes that “right up to the outbreak of the Java War (1825-30), South Central Java, today regarded as the epitome of all that



is most refined in Javanese culture, was deeply influenced by *pasisir*, particularly East Javanese art forms." (*Pasisir*, which literally means coastal regions, is used for convenience sake in the essay to subsume the northeast coast and East Java.)

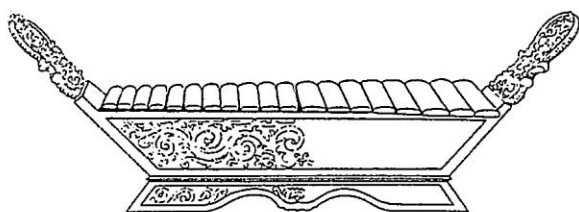
Tim Byard-Jones's brief essay "The Raffles Wayang Puppets," in the book accompanying the exhibition, is, while useful (Byard-Jones is a practising *dhalang* currently resident in Java), much more a general account of Javanese puppets than the title suggests. He may also "nod" at one point when he writes: "wayang purwa ('original' wayang) is the main classical form and uses stories taken from the great Sanskrit epics of the Mahabharata and Ramayana, while wayang madya ('middle' wayang) is used to present stories taken from the medieval romances about the Princes Panji and Damarwulan." As I – not an expert in this field – understand it, and without going into too much detail, the *wayang madya* plays are based on 19th-century epic poetry, and the themes revolve around the east Javanese prophet-king Djajabaya. To quote James Brandon (p 8 of *On Thrones of Gold*, which also supplies a very useful table of *wayang* play cycles): "The Surakarta court poet Ranggawarsita wrote *Pustaka Radja Madya*, a genealogy of Javanese kings said to be descendants of the Pandawas, thus linking the Pandawa cycle and the later Pandji cycle of plays." The Panji plays are actually part of the *wayang gedog* cycle. I need to investigate this further.

Byard-Jones points out that *wayang* is traditionally described as *saptamuka* (seven-faced), combining the arts of vocal music, instrumental music, literature, story-telling, carving, painting, and puppet manipulation; and I confess I find his other contribution to



the book, "The Raffles Gamelans," much more informative. There are two Raffles gamelans, one is at the British Museum, the other at Claydon House, Buckinghamshire. In terms of carving, however, the highly zoomorphic frames of the BM instruments – peacocks, dragons, deer – easily outshine their Plain Jane country cousins. An exhibition caption reads intriguingly that the eminent musicologist Dr Crotch declared the sound of Raden Rana Dipura (who accompanied Raffles to England) playing on the *gambang* (metallophone) to "bear a strong resemblance to the most ancient music of Scotland." According to Neil Sorrell, *A Guide to the Gamelan*, the Raffles instruments remained the only ones here until 1977, when the Indonesian Embassy in London acquired a set from Solo, named *Gamelan Kyai Rawatmeja*, whereas today, according to Byard-Jones, Britain has about 50 active gamelan groups.

I was aware that Western composers have been inspired by gamelan since Debussy and knew Benjamin Britten as the British composer most closely associated with gamelan (indeed his recording debut was as a participant in a piano duet, in 1941, performing Colin McPhee's *Balinese Ceremonial Music*, based on the Canadian's research in Bali in the mid-1930s). I had seen the gamelan-influenced *The Prince of the Pagodas* danced at Covent Garden three or four years ago, but the following twist in the story of the ballet's creation (see Bayan Northcott's article "Multicultural pick-and-mix" in *The Independent*, 5 2 99), which nicely illustrates art's absorptive powers and the sometimes complicated nature of influence, was new to me. In 1956 Benjamin Britten made a trip to Bali to research and make recordings of gamelan in preparation for his ballet. However, a striking passage in Act II of that work actually derives from a



recording made in London by a visiting Balinese ensemble in 1952. What research later demonstrated, however, is that the track in question was inspired by Britten's own music. The manager of the Balinese visit, wishing the players to devise an opening number that would bridge the cultural gap for Western listeners, had played them *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*. Yet Britten seems to have been unaware at the time of the recording's provenance, and this is perhaps no wonder, since, to the Western ear, even so acute a Western ear as Britten's, this piece sounds as Balinese as the rest.

The remaining essays cover other aspects of Raffles' life. Do not (because of the title) neglect Joe Cribb's fascinating contribution, "Raffles's Magic Coins," which traces back the depiction of an early version of the Panji story on the coins collected by Raffles to the pre-Islamic period.

If you enjoyed the wry wit and learning of Nigel Barley's *The Innocent Anthropologist* and *Not a Hazardous Sport*, then *The Duke of Puddle Dock: Travels in the footsteps of Stamford Raffles* will not disappoint. By the way, the curator of the exhibition, both in the book of the show and the biography, argues that Raffles expected to go down in history as a natural historian. He founded, along with Sir Humphry Davy, the Zoological Society of London, today's London Zoo, in his last year of his life. And he is commemorated by the *Rafflesia arnoldii*, the "stinking corpse lily," a parasitic flower up to 94cm in diameter. Crowds queued at Kew in the summer of 1996 in the hope (disappointed, I recall) of witnessing the very rare blossoming of the titan arum, a plant which also comes from Sumatra and possesses a carrion-rich aroma. How these compare with the fetid sickness of the durian (see Yule and Burnell's *Hobson-Jobson* for an array of aromatic descriptions), which I have sampled, I cannot say, but Indonesia does seem to have cornered the world market in malodorous plants.

In connection with the Raffles exhibition Anna Ingleby will be providing a free demonstration/workshop at the British Museum on Tuesday 6 April, at 11am, 1pm, and 2pm. This will comprise a Cirebonese mask dance, some brief glimpses of *wayang golek* movement, and some discussion of these forms, including – for younger members of the audience – a quick look at the *kuda lumping* horse dance. In the last issue I mentioned a 25-minute-long BBC programme called "Wayang Golek – Puppeteers of West Java." Anna kindly agreed to review it.

Wayang Golek – Puppeteers of West Java

Anna Ingleby

The documentary with the above title provides a very charming insight into the vibrant yet lesser known art of *wayang golek*, the three-dimensional wooden rod puppets of Sunda.

Simon Cook clearly and concisely explains some basic principles of the genre, using the Rasta family in Bandung as an example. We see extracts of a performance by Atik Rasta and his group of musicians, which includes many family members, not least being his father, Otong Rasta, whose grandfather came from Cirebon, on the north coast (although that was not made clear in the subtitles).

In Cirebon we can find an earlier (quite rare) form called *wayang cepak*, whose stories relate to the Islamic ones shared by the mask dramas, and the puppets generally have less movement. If Otong Rasta's grandfather did indeed come from Cirebon and teach many *dalang* his art, this would support the theory that *wayang golek* are the descendants of *wayang cepak* in their technique or shape at least, even if their stories (as in this documentary) follow the *purwa* stories of the Ramayana and Mahabharata, which are believed to have been developed from those used in the *wayang kulit* of north and central Java.

In Bandung *wayang golek* have developed very lively movements, different *dalang* developing their own styles and strengths. Perhaps the most innovative is Pak Asep

Sunander Sunarya, who introduced puppets smoking real cigarettes, and *wayang teknis* – “technical” puppets with exploding heads which can vomit noodles or bleed red syrup (although these are not frequently used). *Wayang golek* is an art form which, unlike *wayang kulit*, can incorporate many different dance forms in its movement, and in this documentary Atik Rasta provides us with a good, high-quality glimpse of what we are likely to see at a *wayang golek* show these days.

We are also shown how the puppets are carved, and during an interview with Atik Rasta and one of his sons we very typically see all the friends and neighbours gathered round, proving that this filming has nothing of the artificial air which occurs when *wayang golek* are recorded for television over in Indonesia! Seeing this and hearing Sundanese accents instantly transported me back to Bandung. When I left Bandung last August, having lived there for two years, I was afraid of feeling far away back in Britain, but seeing this reminded me that once you form an attachment to a place and/or specific art form such as *wayang golek*, it can never leave your heart.

The connection of *wayang golek* with mask dance is also illustrated when we are shown extracts of West Javanese (possibly Bandung-style) mask dance, in particular the character of Tumenggung. I only wished I could see more – but this is also a good thing.

Obviously *wayang golek* shows change with time, for example, these days the singers always use a PA system. This is a constantly evolving and living tradition, and perhaps this is one of the secrets of its vibrancy. Otong Rasta points out that he cannot predict the fate of his *dalang* grandson (and I imagine the people of Indonesia could be in for a rough ride for some years yet), but for me his most memorable words are when he adds that “the art of the *dalang* will not disappear, I’m sure.” Over the centuries this art has survived and adapted to many invasions of

rulers and religions. Let us hope that it continues to survive the latest larger-than-life cultural invasion of Western trends, TV, and karaoke. Somehow I am inclined to agree with Otong Rasta – the art of the *dalang* will not disappear, I’m sure.



The Puppeteer's Wayang

Latiff Mohidin

*the wayang is over
rawana is dead
no longer the curses and blood
no longer bitterness and lightning
the skies are again at peace*

*for the hundredth time
rama and sita
live happily
in the chest*

*now,
puppeteer
you may sleep soundly
on the shredded
banana trunk*

*but look
puppeteer,
the audience is still standing
still standing
waiting for rawana to return to life
waiting
for the wayang to begin once more*

(Translated by Muhammad Haji Salleh, from *The Puppeteer's Wayang: A selection of modern Malaysian poetry*, edited and introduced by Muhamminad Haji Salleh, co-publication between In Print Publishing Ltd and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Malaysia, 1992.)

John Morley has had an interest in Punch since an early age, and made his "debut" performance at the age of 10 before some of the UK's top Punchmen, including the late Percy Press Senior, at a Guild meeting in 1972. He started performing Punch in foreign languages, including Arabic, in 1978 and became a "semiprofessional" in 1982. He is presently studying for an MA in Linguistics and Translation Studies in Arabic and Spanish and is doing further research into Mr Punch's cousins in the Islamic world.

As there is also a distinct lack of material in English on the Danish side of the family, he offers the following information.

He would be very pleased to receive further information on Mester Jakel from readers.

Mester Jakel – the Punch Tradition in Denmark

John Morley

Of all the various Punch and Judy traditions in western Europe, the Danish equivalent – the *Mester Jakel Komedie* – seems to have been singularly neglected by historians of the puppet theatre, particularly in the English-speaking world. This is somewhat surprising, as the hero of these glove puppet shows, Mester Jakel (pronounced "Yah-kl"), has been in existence since at least the final decade of the 18th century.

Having felt for some time that an account of this interesting folk tradition was long overdue, I recently decided to delve into its history and evolution by examining Danish-language material on the subject. Thus much of the information presented here has been culled from the excellent research carried out by Svend Smith and published in his *Mester Jakel* (1945)¹ and from *Vi Spiller Dukketeater* (1969)².

The origins of Mester Jakel (or Jakel for short) are somewhat obscure, as is the derivation of his name. Smith suggests that "Jakel" may derive from the Low German diminutive form of Jacob or from *Jäkel*,

¹ *Mester Jakel* – Svend Smith, Nyt Nordisk Forlag Arnold Busck, Copenhagen (1945).

² *Vi Spiller Dukketeater* – Politikens Forlag, Copenhagen (1969).



meaning "yokel" or "blockhead." Alternatively, it may derive from Maître Jacques, a puppet character popular in northern France or from the German Meister Hemmerlein, another puppet character whose name was used for a "Merry Andrew," "hangman" or "fairground entertainer." As regards the stock plays he appeared in, these seem to contain certain elements of the old German, Austrian and French comic traditions.

The earliest known pictorial evidence for *Mester Jakel* comes from an illustration by an artist called Stanley, dating from 1795 (when the French Revolution was in full swing). It shows an exaggeratedly large booth flying the Danish flag with the emblem of King Christian VII, surrounded by railings with an audience largely made up of well-dressed adults. To one side of the booth stands a man blowing a trumpet, presumably to attract the crowds. The stage itself shows a street scene with three puppet figures standing near a tub and a cradle. To the puppeteer's left stands a Polichinelle-type figure with pointed cap and pigtail, in the middle the figure of a man, and to the right the Devil, with prominent horns. The booth is an attraction at a fairground on the Kirsten Piils Kilde, which was once the site of a sacred spring and a place of pilgrimage in the

16th century. This area subsequently became part of the Dyrehavsbakken (or Bakken for short), just north of Copenhagen, and this was to provide the main pitches for Jakel for almost two hundred years.

It is quite possible that the puppeteer whose booth was depicted by Stanley was a Hanoverian called Egesdorff, who may have been in partnership with a Dane called Jorgen Quist. It is also possible that Egesdorff was in competition with another Danish showman called Francke circa 1794. Should Egesdorff have been the first to introduce Jakel to Denmark, then this is worthy of note, as it was also a German, Häusermann, who is credited with introducing Kasper to Sweden in 1856.

We are most fortunate in that Smith reproduces four of the traditional Jakel plays in his book, including the earliest extant play, *Madam Roset*, which, in all probability, dates from the 1790s and may have been performed by Francke. The story itself may owe something to contemporary southern Austrian comedy. The version quoted in Smith was probably written down in about 1840 but the action is difficult to follow at times because of a lack of appropriate stage-directions. However, here, for the reader's interest, is a brief résumé of the plot:

Scene One. A suitor comes on hoping to meet Madam Roset, wife of a tavern-keeper. He calls her and tells her he has come to propose marriage to her. She replies that she has no time to talk and asks him to return in an hour's time. The suitor turns to the audience and vows to see her again in half an hour's time.

Scene Two. Old Jakel, an elderly gentleman (who is an apprentice tailor), comes on and addresses the audience saying that he has already had five wives and has his eye on Madam Roset to be his sixth! The vain, coquettish lady then appears, asking what his business is. He in turn asks for her hand in marriage. She replies that she might consider it but he will have to agree to keep three promises as part of a contract. Firstly,

he will have to get up early, prepare some coffee and chocolate and bring these to her in bed. The suitor reappears and promptly kicks Jakel out as he is determined to have the lady for himself. Jakel comes on again and Madam Roset explains the suitor is simply her outdoor servant.

On inquiring what the second promise is, Jakel is told that he will have to walk behind her in the morning carrying a basket to market. He remarks "God help me – an old man carrying a basket? I have enough trouble carrying myself!" She tells him that if he becomes unwell, she can have him cured, whereupon the suitor returns proclaiming *he* is the lady's domestic doctor! Once again, he kicks Jakel out. Jakel becomes suspicious but Madam Roset explains he is merely her servant.

The third promise is that he should peep through his fingers at all the good-looking visitors who call on her. "So you want me to be a cuckold at my old age, do you?" – Jakel retorts.

Scene Three. The suitor attempts to woo Roset again. He expresses his love for her and she in turn asks him to accede to the same three demands she placed on Jakel. The suitor is very enthusiastic and she declares that he can be her husband and that they can dispense with a priest. They kiss. The suitor asks her to attend to the cooking while he attends to the guests but she tells him to tend the garden as she will take care of the guests. When he tells her to go, she refuses and he hits her and kicks her out, declaring that he wishes to show her who is now master of the house!

Scene Four. A tavern with Jakel's son and the tavern-keeper (Madam Roset's husband). Jakel's son asks for a tankard of beer. As the landlord is keen to ascertain whether his customer has enough money on him, he taps his pocket. It clinks so the landlord says he will bring a beer immediately. However, the fact is that Jakel's son is penniless but he does not want to let on. Having consumed the beer, he

declares to the landlord that he is penniless but says that his honest old father will come the following day to pay him. The landlord is furious and hits him. Sure enough, the next day, Old Jakel comes to the tavern asking why the landlord hit his son. A fight soon breaks out involving a tankard.

Scene Five. (Presumably the tavern-keeper's house). The landlord comes on saying he is reverting to his old trade, that of a tailor. He calls his apprentice, Jakel, whom he addresses as "lad." Jakel says he is busy as he has to prepare some coffee for Madam Roset. The landlord persuades Jakel to appear and admires him as a "decent worker." He asks him to fetch his tailor's table and some material to sew. He says Jakel can be a "master" in two days' time. Jakel, however, thinks the landlord is an old scoundrel. Jakel is promised various rewards if he sews well. The landlord makes to go out but Jakel warns him not to get drunk as he did two days earlier, whereupon his employer exclaims "Damn you, lad – will you tell the dear audience about my error?"

He leaves and Madam Roset comes on and inquires about the coffee. Jakel replies he has had a problem with the kettle and is quite firm with her. She soon goes out and the suitor returns, asking Jakel if he may have access to Roset but Jakel is non-committal. Roset reappears and tells the suitor that she is really married to an honest old tailor. Of course, she wants to ensure that her husband does not discover their affair. They kiss. Jakel is observing this and, in an aside, tells the audience he will reveal all when the husband gets home.

The suitor asks Roset what she will tell her husband when he gets back and she replies that she will make him believe he is her brother who has been abroad for fifteen years and has just returned. At this point, the husband appears and Roset explains the man is her "brother." The husband is quite surprised but seems to believe her and asks her to attend to the cooking. Realising Jakel has not sewn a stitch, he calls his apprentice,

who says he is busy preparing a roast for the lady. The landlord is angry and demands that he appear. Jakel promptly tells him about Roset's lie and explains that the man is her fiancé. The landlord is furious and goes out. Roset calls Jakel and asks whether the roast is ready and tells him to bring it for her hungry "brother." The suitor comes on, Jakel lays the table, and the suitor sits down. The landlord reappears, still furious, and has a fight with the suitor. In the confusion which ensues, Jakel comes on with the roast and throws it over the suitor's head!

Here the text ends, somewhat abruptly. The play was clearly written for an adult audience and it has, to my mind, some of the qualities of a European fairy tale and comes across as a kind of farce, where Jakel is reminiscent of Pantaloon in the *Commedia dell' Arte*.

The other three playlets seem to be Danish adaptations of some of the episodes in the German fairground *Kasper* repertoire, which may have been introduced by Egesdorff.

In *The Jew or Old Jakel's Misfortunes*, Jakel appears once again as an old man, this time with all the mischievous cunning of the German folk hero Till Eulenspiegel. A Jew comes on asking to be paid back money he lent Jakel and his wife to buy clothes for their silver wedding anniversary. Jakel borrows half the amount from a local distiller and the Jew says he will return the next day for the rest. Jakel tells his wife not to worry as he has a plan and asks their servant to clean and fetch an old coffin in the loft which Jakel has used before to "play dead" in such circumstances!

As the servant is cleaning it out, he finds some old bread crumbs, some mouldy cheese rinds and a bottle with a small amount of distilled spirits! When the Jew returns, Jakel gets his wife to cry and climbs into the coffin and pretends to be dead. In the end, Jakel beats the Jew to death and decides to bury him in the garden. He gets the servant to help him put the corpse into the coffin and

take it in turns to cry over it (cf our Punch and Joey). The coffin is carried out to the chant "Now it's all right, now it's all right again!" The theme of the coffin is reminiscent of the German *Kasper* and Dutch *Jan Klaassen*, while that of the moneylending Jew also appears in the Swedish *Kasper*.

In *The Executioner's Young Assistant or The Hanging*, Old Jakel has a servant, Kasper, whom he instructs to go out and buy four horses. As he hands him the money, Jakel warns him "... Take care of it or else I'll take care of your hide when you get back!" Kasper starts his journey but is extremely tired and decides to have a nap and sleep on the money he has just been given. Along comes a Sorcerer (in later versions, a Jew) who wishes to swindle Kasper and steal his money by making him climb into a sack so that he can "increase" his money for him! Kasper is persuaded to do so and the Sorcerer snatches the money and runs off with it.

Soon Old Jakel comes by and notices the sack. When he discovers it is Kasper, he asks where the horses and money are. Jakel realises what has happened and says Kasper will hang for his foolishness. The executioner's assistant is summoned and announces "You're going to hang now!" whereupon Kasper replies "Oh, good heavens! Can't it wait till tomorrow, as I'm having such a bad time today?" There then follows the familiar noose routine where Kasper finally hangs the executioner's assistant.

One version finishes as above, while another continues with Kasper fetching the Devil to take the body away; yet another has Kasper saying "The Devil wasn't home – but now his nephew's coming. He's such a quick, brisk walker!" (This is presumably a reference to death.) There is certainly scope for improvisation here.

In *The King of Prussia*, an army recruiting officer, who happens to be the King of Prussia, comes on looking for likely recruits.

He spots Kasper and sounds him out as to whether he would like to be a soldier. When Kasper realises he will receive bread and his pay every fifth day, he agrees to join. The king intends to show him how to drill properly and stand in a sentry box. The dialogue is quite fast-moving, with several weak puns and silly reactions on the part of Kasper, eg:

King: Look, Kasper – here you have a gun. You take it like this, on your shoulder and you go here – up and down, up and down.

Kasper: Like this? (He jumps up and down.)

In the end, Kasper kills the king and then notices a black shape descending. First he thinks it could be a blacksmith, then a chimney sweep – but he soon realises it is none other than Old Nick! They soon fight and the Devil disappears. Kasper goes back to his sentry box to wait for his sweetheart Mette (or "cupboard lover," as he calls her). She promptly comes on with a delicious black pudding for him. He kisses Mette and she leaves. Then a monster, the dog Delle, comes up, having smelt the sausage. The dog grabs the sausage and runs off with it. It then reappears and devours the corpse of the soldier king!

Once again, we have quite an abrupt ending here. The character of the soldier king may be based on Frederik Wilhelm I, King of Prussia (1713-40), who represented the tough, tyrannical *Junker* or German army officer. The drilling scene can be found in the German *Kasper*, the Dutch *Jan Klaassen* and the Russian *Petrushka*, while the monster dog is equivalent to the *Barbos* in *Petrushka* and the dog in the Italian *Pulcinella*.

We cannot be certain exactly what Mester Jakel looked like initially, but by the mid-19th century, he had a dark red floppy cap, often with a tassel, fair hair, and a long, dark jacket worn over a wide-sleeved shirt, with buttons down his waistcoat – a costume he



continued to wear until the 1930s. He often wielded a stick and was portrayed as either a young or old man, who could be both wily and argumentative.

The puppets were usually carved of wood and the plays were passed from one player to another, apparently in oral form. From the very outset, puppeteers had to obtain licences from the Royal Chancellery in Copenhagen in order to perform. These lists provide evidence of an almost unbroken chain of performers at the Dyrehavsbakken. Among the most famous players were Johan Adam Datz, who performed Jakel for 35 years, from 1843 to 1878. By 1863 he had set up a permanent, wooden booth – a tradition which has continued almost up to the present day.

In 1878, Datz's apprentice, dubbed "Jakel" Jensen took over, using puppets carved by C Salomonsen. A spell in prison from 1888-9 put an end to Jensen's puppet activities. During his time, the dog puppet was called "Klipfisken" (literally, "dried cod"!).

By the turn of the century, at a time when the Punch show had reached the height of its popularity in numerous countries, the show was being performed by Sofie and Martin Petersen, the resident strongman at Bakken. Martin died in 1903 and Sofie subsequently married Charles Schenstrøm, a drummer and marionette-player who was also the son of Bakken's old tightrope walker and acrobat. He performed with a certain Spangenberg, who had been Martin Petersen's stand-in, until 1931, and called his dog puppet Delle (literally, "roll of fat"!). In the winter months, Schenstrøm appeared in private homes, as did his predecessors. It may safely be said that the old-style plays came to a halt when Schenstrøm gave up performing in 1931.

The decline in the popularity of *Mester Jakel* seems to set in shortly after this time, although puppet theatres – such as that of Helgo Jørgensen with its stylized rod puppets – continued to be active in Copenhagen throughout the thirties.

By the 1960s, a truly remarkable and quite inexplicable metamorphosis had taken place, whereby Mester Jakel had been transformed into a tall comic jester, with a slightly hooked nose and chin, legs (but no hump), wearing red and green motley and matching cap with two bell-capped horns. This may have been due to the ever-present influence of the German Kasper, particularly the standard image of him created by Max Jacob. Jakel's character mellowed somewhat and the plays he appeared in were geared for quite a different audience, namely younger children.

Two modern (1960s?) plays are given in *Vi Spiller Dukketeater* which amply demonstrate this change. The first is entitled *Mester Jakel the Baker* by Jytte Abildstrøm and involves a young Jakel and his wife baking French bread in their kitchen – even the cat gets thrown into the dough mixture! When the dough rises, it turns on Jakel and punches him. Jakel is frightened of it and wants to throw it out. He devises a game whereby they must keep silent. The first person to utter a word has to throw it out. No sooner have they begun then a "Sly Fellow" knocks at the door wanting to know how to get to town. Naturally, he receives no reply and thinks Jakel and his wife must be daft. The "Sly Fellow" then tries to steal a string of sausages from the wall, but Jakel throws the dough at him and he tumbles out of the door, dropping the string of sausages, much to the delight of Jakel and his wife.

In *Mester Jakel and the Sausage Man* (performed at Legoland's children's theatre), Mester Jakel is passing a hot-dog stand one day and is enticed by the smell of the sausages cooking. He decides to order one but, unbeknown to him and the vendor, a dog jumps up and snatches the sausage from the counter. This happens several times with

the vendor becoming steadily more exasperated with Jakel. Eventually, the vendor says he is going to fetch some more sausages and puts Jakel in charge of the stall. Soon a customer, "Ole Fraek," appears and plays a trick on Jakel. Jakel then notices the dog and realizes what has been happening. When the vendor returns, he tries to convince him about the dog. The dog jumps up again and seizes the vendor by the nose. "Get rid of it!" – he screams. "Do I get my sausage, then?" – asks Jakel. "You can have as many as you like, if you'll only get rid of it!" Jakel chases the dog out and asks for two sausages with onions and ketchup as his reward and goes out jubilantly.

In both short plays, there is ample scope for plenty of slapstick and audience participation, as opposed to the more traditional plays, which audiences would probably have viewed as passive spectacles. By the end of the 1960s, some of the old puppets were to be found in the Nationalmuseet and Teaterhistorisk Museum in Copenhagen.

Unlike many of his foreign cousins, Mester Jakel does not appear to have been "swazzled," although there is, apparently, a Danish term for "swazzle" (namely *tungefløjte*), which may in turn simply be a direct translation of the German *Zungenpfeife* (literally, "tongue-whistle").

By the early 1980s there was an artist called Hilsen Fra performing in his cottage-like theatre at Bakken a version of Jakel not unlike our Punch and Judy, complete with baby, ghost and hangman. His Jakel was the jester-type figure, while the wife (who seems to be unnamed in Denmark) wore a white mob-cap, spotted dress and white apron like our Judy. As well as Jakel, Hilsen Fra performed as Pierrot and did conjuring as well as general clowning. Sadly, he seems to have been one of the last exponents of the old-style Jakel shows.

Although the tradition appears to have died out in Denmark, the name Jakel is still well-known and was the title used for the

Danish version of Harrison Birtwistle's avant-garde opera *Punch and Judy* (1966-7) when it was premiered in Copenhagen in 1981.

It is to be hoped that someone will soon revive this venerable tradition in Denmark, even if it is deemed necessary to render it more "politically correct," so that old Mester Jakel can be taken laughing and singing into the 21st century.

(Many thanks to Ray DaSilva, "Prof" John Styles, and Lilo Skaarup for the information and material they have been able to provide.)

Henrik Kemény and Vitéz László: Words, Words, Words

"At dawn the police, army, and secret police surrounded the Liget, and there were so many of them that they blocked off the whole fairground. Then they drew up a list of everything they found. We had to leave the Liget and my mother... poor thing, she had given up her whole life for this. She and my father built the booth with their own bare hands. She said she'd never leave there, she'd rather die there.... I'm sorry, no, no, no.... I don't want to speak about that." This was puppetmaster Henrik Kemény's very brief, tearful appearance in a programme called "Big War in Lilliput" (broadcast on Channel 4, in November 1997), which tells the seriocomic story of an attempt to reopen the world-famous Lilliput Theatre of dwarves, which had been closed down by the Communists in 1949, along with the rest of Budapest's main popular amusement park, on the grounds that it was "bourgeois."

"There seems to be little material on this outside of Hungarian," I wrote apropos of Vitéz László (*Bulletin*, July 1996). "I should like therefore to return to this subject when I am better informed." However, even with the above reminder of the artist who had so enthused me (and John Phillips) with his bravura performance at the UNIMA Festival



in Budapest, I was unable – for the usual reason of lack of time – to do so. However, I hope I am able (with more than a little help from my friends) to make honourable amends at this late date.

I shall add just a little more factual historical and biographical information about Henrik Kemény and Vitéz László than in my original article, but, essentially, I decided to take a linguistic turn, inspired by the comment (p 187) in McCormick and Pratasik's *Popular puppet theatre in Europe, 1800-1914 (PPTE)* that "Infectious punning is also very common with Hungary's Vitéz László, who gets into hopeless linguistic misunderstanding, as, for example, when he confuses 'malom' (mill) and 'majom' (monkey)."

PPTE (p 123) also neatly sums up the glove-puppet's origins: "A comparative late-comer as a new puppet character was Vitéz László, created by Károly Hincz in Budapest in 1905, in response to the upsurge of Magyarism. A conglomerate of Paprika Jancsi, Kasper of the Vienna Prater, and a new heroic type, Vitéz László,* took his

* Vitéz (a Slav borrowing) means valiant, gallant; soldier, knight. There is another national figure, for example, called János Vitéz "John the Hero." László is a common name like John or Jack. Kemény's own

name from a play which had been a rallying point for Hungarian nationalism and consequently banned after the 1948-9 revolution." Hetty Paërl, whom I met by chance for the first time at a Kemény performance in Budapest, in the chapter she devotes to Vitéz László in her book *Heerekrintjes* reports that he appeared in folk puppet shows much earlier but adds, significantly, "though it is uncertain whether these reports are to be believed."

The two most important dynasties in Hungarian puppet theatre, both of which had travelling origins in the 19th century and settled in Budapest, are the Hincz and Korngut-Kemény families. Salomon Korngut and his son Henrik Korngut-Kemény set up their theatre in Budapest in the early part of this century, and Vitéz László also became part of their repertoire. In fact, it was the Kemény family (into which the present Henrik Kemény was born on 29 January 1925) which was really to develop the character.

The capital had various parks where puppeteers staged their shows. Kemény's theatre had a working-class locale and audience, where the folk hero was in his element: "...the road to the Városliget (City Park) went through the areas inhabited by civil servants, past barracks, and the slum districts on the outskirts. Between the two world wars the Városliget became the place where the poor went for their entertainment – and to go on strike." (from the 11-page summary *Wanderpuppenspiel und Künstlerisches Puppentheater in Ungarn bis zum Jahre 1945* to Belitska-Scholz Hedvig's *Vásári és Művészi Bábjátás Magyarországon 1945-IG*, Tihany, 1974. The Városliget, which was laid out in 1798, and stands at the top of Budapest's longest avenue, Andrassy út, still has an amusement park). The performances of knockabout farce at Kemény's theatre placed a premium

name is two syllables, the "ny" is a single, soft sound as in English "canyon."

on rapid execution and they were technically brilliant. Hincz's theatre was in a much more refined part of the city and the audience was middle class.

Readers will be very familiar with wordplay in popular theatre – Punch being our grand puppet exemplar of linguistic exuberance. However, even he must, I think, accord primacy in this domain to Vitéz László, in full flow – and Kemény's whole performance is delivered at lightning speed.

I believe the examples given (which come from four performances on two commercial videos of Kemény, which include some non-Vitéz László routines) are sufficiently clear to enable readers to appreciate the profuse verbal playfulness and the “mechanics” of it even if they are not able to assign the correct phonetic value to the Hungarian sounds.

1. Adding bits to words in nonsensical or diminutizing way:

a kutyikafáját (kutyafáját) = drat
nagymamucika (nagymama) = granny
nadigrád (nadrág) = trousers
cipellő (cipő) = shoes
sapika (sapka) = hat
szaomjatos (szomjas) = thirsty
kihulcsluk (kulcsluk) = keyhole
pofontot (pofont) kapsz = you'll get a clip round the ear
ellopikálta (ellopta) = he stole it
álmitos (álmos) = sleepy
mutitasd (mutasd) meg magadat = show yourself
Molinári (molnár) bacsi = Mr Miller
gabonyákokat (gabonaszákokat) = sacks of grain
becsukikálja (becsukja) = he shuts it
pofontot (pofont) = clip, slap
éhetes es szomjatos (éhes es szomjas) = hungry and thirsty
ráérkezem (ráérek) = I've got time

2. Different but similar sounding words used:

mángorolni (to mangle) for *vándorolni* (to wander)

a hörcsögök nem akarják megenni az uzsonnát (the hamsters don't want to eat their tea) for *az ördögök nem engedik megörölni a gabonát* (the devils won't let us grind the grain)

1. *Plutó!*

2. *Gyújtó?* = lighter? (burner)

bőrt rágok (I'm chewing skin) for *őrt állok* (I'm standing guard)

1. *En vagyok a Lucifer!* (I'm Lucifer)

2. *Cuclifer?* (*cucli* = dummy for babies)

kezét csukálom (*kezét csókolom* = polite greeting, literally, I kiss your hand/*csókolni*; here it is a *csuka* pike (fish) that is being kissed.)

mákolni (*mák* = poppyseed) for *zsákolni* (to put in sacks)

ahol a nincs van (where the nothing is) for *ahol a kincs van* (where the treasure is)

kilincs (lock) for *kincs* (treasure)

bolond (mad) for *boldog* (happy)

gödör (pit) for *vödör* (bucket)

1. *száműzött remete* (exiled hermit)

2. *fekete feneke?* = (black bottom?)

1. *sok a munka* (there's a lot of work)

2. *sok a sonka?* (much ham?)

1. *alapja van* (it has a basis)

2. *kalapja van?* (it has/you have a hat?)

kalimpálnak (swinging their legs/wobble) for *kolompolnak* (ringing bells)

jo reggelit kívánok (enjoy your breakfast) for *jó reggelt kívánok* (good morning)

kacsóit (small hands) for *kacsáit* (your ducks)

3. Puns:

Q: *akarsz valami jó pénzt keresni?* (do you want to earn some good money?)

A: *én már olyan sokszor kerestem de sohasem találtam* (I've looked so often but never found any); *keresni* = to earn or to look for

1. *Egy jót a fejemre ütöttél* (you gave me a good whack on the head)

2. *Jó volt?* (was it good – here's another)

4. Nonsense:

egy fél kiló sört, a habot alul (half a kilo of beer, with the froth at the bottom)

*majd holnapután ha megint éhes leszek,
vagy tegnapelőtt reggel tíz órakor vagy
délbe este uzsonnára meg fogom vacsorázni*
(the day after tomorrow, if I'm hungry again,
or the day before yesterday morning at ten or
at midday in the evening I'll dine on it for my
tea)

majdnem eltörte a hajamat = he almost
broke my hair

*egy zsák pulyka – hurka – buza – spárga –
árpa* = a sack of turkeys – sausages – wheat
– string – barley

térdigérő huzat = a draught up to your knees
tele van ürességgel (it's full of nothing)

almafából – barack – szilva – dinnye (apple
tree – peach – plum – melon)

5. Pronunciation:

1. *Mit tettél?* = what have you done?

2. *Mit ettél te?* = What have YOU eaten?

1. *Kelj fel!* = get up!

2. *Neki már nem kell tejfel!* = he doesn't
need sour cream any more!

nehéz (nehez) = heavy

énekolni (énekelni) = to sing

However, it is the integration of the different components of the performance that is crucial. To quote *PPTE* again (p 154), and I can bear witness to the truth of the observation: "Today Henrik Kemény, in Budapest, can hold an audience for a good twenty minutes with only two puppets, Vitéz László and a devil. He runs through all the variations of the physical and fight routines, but it is the interplay between these and the verbal element that actually holds the attention. Timing, pacing and rhythm are all factors that affect both voice and physical movement. They work subliminally on audiences and sustain scenes whose only narrative element is a fight which one of the protagonists will win." Hetty Paërl also writes: "I can confirm that Kemény's performance was among the most skilful, exciting, and inspiring puppets shows that I have ever seen." (Her longish description of Kemény's performance of the classic piece "Vitéz László and the Devil's Mill," at the

UNIMA festival in Dresden in 1984, is available, along with the rest of the chapter, in translation from the Dutch on request.)

I have mentioned Punch and there is a pleasing Anglo-Magyar connection here. Thanks to Glyn Edwards and Penny Francis, working through the agency of the Puppet Centre, Kemény was invited over for the "325 Celebrations" in 1987, where he was a smash hit. Glyn tells me Kemény is "revered" by all the Punch performers who have played alongside him and that when he worked with him a few years ago in Naples Kemény told him that the visit to London had led to all manner of subsequent foreign visits. Glyn also described a rather vinous lunch in Italy during which Henrik "as is his wont, turned everything in sight – from the paper napkins to the fruit in the fruit bowl – into a puppet of some sort." He is delighted that it was "Mr Punch, however inadvertently, who caused the Kemény show to set off on its international career. He is an international treasure in the 'Punch and relations genre' if ever there was one." Which seems a very good note on which to sign off on this UNIMA Member of Honour.

PS: This article could not have been written without the help of friends Brigitte Neifer (German), John Pelling (German and Dutch), and Edith Adler (Hungarian), the majority of whose considerable labour is not, however, except for Edith's, evident here. My heartfelt thanks to them.

Small Talk

John Furse

The Smallest of All Persons mentioned in the Records of Littleness by Gaby Wood (Profile Books, £3.99) is little more than a pamphlet. Minute in format – barely postcard size and a mere 88 pages – it tells the tale of the doll-like "Sicilian Fairy," Caroline Crachami. Twenty-one inches tall, the eight-year-old hit the headlines in 1824, when she was exhibited in Bond Street – entrance one shilling, another shilling for a touch.

According to *The Times*, she was “unquestionably the most curious of all the dwarfish candidates for public favour that have visited the metropolis,” though comic actor and freak-show fan Charles Mathews found her “a most disgusting little withered creature,” and clearly Gaby Wood’s task has been to deconstruct the myth and to set the “fairy” tale within a strict social and historical context. As one might expect, not all that was claimed was fact, but the voyeuristic and scientific interest she stirred in the Victorian imagination was considerable, and this is reason enough to recommend it as a “good read.” The publishers tell us that: “Gaby Wood brilliantly re-creates the milieu of Victorian side-shows and macabre interests in this little book that far exceeds its own stature,” and I would not quarrel with that. For the currently curious, Caroline Crachami’s skeleton stands next to that of the 7ft 10in Charles Byrne, “The Irish Giant,” in the Hunterian Collection, in London.

Nor far from freak, the all-American Barbie Doll is commemorated in *Barbie: Four Decades of Fashion, Fantasy and Fun* by the Italian doll expert and lecturer at the Venice Academy of Fine Arts Marco Tosa (Pavilion, £14.99) and is seen as the first comprehensive biography of Barbie. “Hundreds of full (lurid) colour photographs detail her origins, history and physical evolution. *Barbie* is a witty and nicely produced book on a girl who is undoubtedly a major cultural icon – a doll with an outfit – many outfits – and image to suit the fantasy of children and adults worldwide.” Reviewer Laurence Phelan notes that “From the dawn of time, dolls have been the silent allies of children at play – passive and docile, the doll is simultaneously exalted and condemned, the target of the adult world’s sweeping passions that range from unmitigated hatred to the most tender love.” Barbie is beautiful, Barbie is!

Coincidentally, Hilary Mantel recently published a novel *The Giant O’Brien*, O’Brien being the stage name of Charles Byrne, who, as John Furse mentions, towers over the manikin Caroline Crachami in the museum named after the 18th-century anatomist John Hunter.

Théâtres de Papier, Troyes

Charles Broughton

Last December the mediaeval French City of Troyes held a Paper Theatre Festival. Hosted and organized by Alain Lecucq, it attracted practitioners and enthusiasts from across Europe, encouraging them to display their diverse theatrical creations as well as having a good time amongst the cobbles and timbers of this old city.

No paper theatre festival would be complete without the presence of Mr George Speaight (and his wife, Mary), whose research into tracing the history and evolution of Toy Theatre is now regarded by many as being a definitive body of work. And indeed he was the guest of honour at Troyes.

The venue was a community hall just off the Cathedral square. An exhibition of Toy Theatres from around the world filled the foyer and the upper gallery.

Alain Lecucq opened the festival by presenting George with a large silver medal. He explained the importance of George’s research work in the context of the blossoming interest now being shown in toy theatre productions. The flashbulbs popped and George, clearly delighted, thanked his hosts in an impromptu speech in slightly faltering but heartfelt French. And then the Festival began with, fittingly enough, George’s production of *The Miller And His Men*. I had never seen this show and was looking forward to it. Unfortunately, I still haven’t seen it.

The problem was the venue. It was too big for Paper Theatre. It seated up to a hundred, and if it was full and you were any further back than Row 7 or 8 you couldn’t see the tiny stages unless they were raised up high. Sightlines were a problem with George’s show and also with Dirk Reimers’

Pollidor Papiertheater. Both of these stages were set up on tables, and because the auditorium lacked a steep rake, much of the intimacy that is a vital ingredient of Toy Theatre was lost. Having said that, these two showmen are such vibrant and entertaining performers that it went some way toward alleviating the pain of not being able to see.

George's rousing finale, accompanied by the appropriate sound effects of a hammer hitting a tin tray as the mill blows up, produced prolonged applause. He had been feeling unwell earlier in the day and there had been some concern that he wouldn't be able to perform, but he rallied and, ably supported by Mary, gave a performance that was nothing less than a triumph.

Invisius, a German company, presented *The Fisherman And His Wife*. The two operators, Dorett and Rüdiger Koch, concealed behind their theatre, which had been screened off so that the audience focused on the small proscenium opening, performed their piece to a recorded soundtrack. The tale of a bullying wife demanding ever more opulent homes from the magic fish that her husband has saved from the dinner table was told slowly and methodically, gradually building to its climax when the wife's final demand to become God is refused and the Fish strips away her luxurious homes and returns her to the hovel, or in this production the piss pot, from which she started. The husband's repetitive journey from the sea to the shore and the appearance of each new and ever grander house was achieved with an almost mechanical smoothness, which, I later discovered, actually was the case, as the stage had been built onto a revolve almost three feet in circumference surrounded by a cyclorama. Changes of scale and depth, the sets and figures painted in inks and watercolours, coupled with subtle lighting



changes produced hypnotic stage pictures. Then, at the midnight hour, the lights suddenly went out. The audience waited in the dark.

From across the auditorium a pair of henchmen bearing flickering candelabras silently approached and ushered us into our seats. They blew out their tiny flames. Dracula had risen.

Joe Gladwin (Paperplays Theatre) has been performing this show for about two years. Where others work at a slow and even pace, presenting their shows with careful precision, allowing every element to shine through and have its moment of glory, Joe throws everything together, mixing up a rich concoction of countless scene changes, hundreds of lighting cues and a cornucopia of character voices which he then hurls at his audience and lets them take from it what they will. The result is a visual and aural feast. This is a glorious romp through Bram Stoker's Gothic tale, and although some of the audience may not have understood the British seaside humour of the script, the intricate sets and special effects kept the tale rolling along. The ride to the Borgo Pass – the ship's passage across a stormy sea – Dracula's castle crumbling to dust – exciting and engrossing moments, all the more extraordinary when you remember that the sets are no bigger than a shoebox.



So, at half past one, we emerged bleary eyed into the night. Directly opposite the theatre was a late-night bar. Fatal to an old lush like me.

The following morning we met in the Bibliothèque Municipale de Troyes. A vast room had been set aside for us, holding, we

were told, some 47,000 books. I was a little late arriving and George had already started his talk on his lifetime's research into the history of Toy Theatre. Demonstrating the diverse styles of theatre sheets from many different countries, he handed round a large selection of sheets and playtexts which he had brought from home. He talked of his early days working in an Oxford Street bookshop, where he performed his shows in a back room, encouraging the customers to purchase Toy Theatres before they left.

Throughout the festival there was much discussion as to how to perform Toy Theatre. Should the showman be seen or hidden? Should it always be live voice? The festival had a wide selection of shows performed in a variety of styles. It seemed clear and maybe obvious that each show had its own particular style because that was how the showman wanted it performed, but then, if that meant that he was hidden or the show taped, did it qualify as Toy Theatre? Watching the showman, it was argued, is as important as watching the spectacle onstage. It also means that the audience can see what is going on – they are *in on the act*. But, then, screening off the theatre heightens the sense of anticipation. It is mysterious, focusing the audience's attention on to the stage, dazzling them with spectacle and ingenuity, making them absorb what is happening, not how it is achieved.

The taped shows were certainly professional and smooth, but they did lack spontaneity, and when the operator was hidden and the curtain came down for a scene change, there wasn't much to look at. Enjoying a Toy Theatre show includes enjoying all the different elements that go into its presentation. It becomes a very personal viewpoint.

Dirk Reimers' Pollidor Papiertheater, from Germany, confirmed the importance of the Toy Theatre showman. "I have forgotten to bring along my music box. I am sorry." – he began. "So in between the scene changes I shall sing a song and if you know it then do

please join in." This disarming approach, whether deliberate or not, worked like a charm. Standing beside his theatre, he pushed on the figures and left them standing on stage. He then acted out the plot, performing all the action and emotion his characters were experiencing. His performance was in perfect harmony with the scale of his theatre, displaying a complete understanding of how the appeal of Toy Theatre can be achieved simply and effectively. Acres of dialogue can swamp these tiny figures. Their only movement is a repetitive backwards and forwards motion showing which character is speaking. They cannot convey emotions the way puppets can, and yet, by relating in turn – first to the audience, and then to his theatre – Dirk achieved a perfect balance between his performance and the spectacle onstage. Toy Theatre isn't a theatre of miniature actors, nor is it puppet theatre, it is more of a hybrid of the two relying for much of its success on its charm. Its apparent simplicity coupled with a very individual approach certainly broadens its appeal and makes for great entertainment.

Papilu, from Slovenia, perform shows for infants. Concealed behind a booth, the husband and wife team of Brane and Maja Šolce presented a traditional puppet show with cut-out paper characters. They had put together a compilation of scenes from their repertoire. It all involved a lot of dancing, and all on the beat. The characters danced, mushrooms danced, tables and chairs danced; in fact if it moved then it danced and occasionally emitted strange sounds which presumably babies can understand. Everything was taped, nothing went on for too long and it was all very colourful. But relentless. Even babies need breathers. The midnight hour struck once more and Dracula rose again from his dusty coffin.

The following morning a Grand Auction was held in the bar from which some of us had left just a few short hours before. Nervously smoked cigarettes cast a heavy pall in the room, a blue haze through which

the collectors attempted to outbid each other. "These are my little moments of heaven" enthused one collector afterwards as he showed me his acquisitions. "I am in paradise. They will give me the purest pleasure." There were over 150 lots. The highest bid was 800 francs (about £80) for a single sheet showing a decorated proscenium arch with red drapes. Apparently a rare item, and keenly contested. A unique chance to acquire an authentic piece of Toy Theatre history. The final performance of the Festival was *Genoveva* by Theater Taptoe, from Belgium. Up till now we had grown used to seeing individual performers lifting out their theatres from battered suitcases and unwrapping their sets and figures from old towels and blankets tied up with string.

Theater Taptoe arrived in a large white truck crammed full of scenery. A company of six, four performers and two stagehands, proceeded to transform the theatre into a Victorian Parlour, complete with an upright piano, chandeliers, marble columns, a chaise longue, and silken drapes. But no Toy Theatre.

Costumed in Victorian attire, the company greeted us at the door and showed us to our seats. I was very fortunate in being placed at a small table in the front complete with a bottle of red wine and a glass. More drink.... Oh dear.... Oh well.... Each of the cast took on the individual role of a member of an upper-class Victorian household. The master of the house would be reciting the piece and playing the villain. His wife would accompany the action on the piano and sing the songs, and his son and the servant would perform the show.

At that moment the theatre was lifted up from the back and placed on top of the piano. No problems with sightlines this time. *Genoveva* contains all the elements essential to a rousing melodrama: passionate love, wicked betrayal, hopeless despair, filial devotion, and final absolution. The show's highlight was a huge battle between the Crusaders and the Saracens which evoked in

gory detail all of the horror involved with such contests. Knights were decapitated, stomachs torn open, limbs severed, bodies split in two plus numerous impalements. The stage was soon piled high with paper corpses. Achieving such ingenious stage trickery exploited this company's comic talents to the full. Clearly relishing their roles, the four actors played to the gallery, sweeping the audience along with their passion and enthusiasm. At the finale *Genoveva's* spirit rose heavenward lit by a single tiny candle.

The Paper Theatre Festival is held in Troyes every two years and I know it is Alain Lecucq's wish that next time it be held at a different time of year. Two weeks before Christmas isn't ideal for many people. My wish is that it should be held in a more suitable venue.

Throughout this article I have used the terms Toy Theatre and Paper Theatre. They mean the same thing. Sometimes you will hear it called New Model Theatre. I have also stuck to the word "showman." This is not being sexist: I have yet to see a woman Toy Theatre performer. Indeed this formed part of a lively debate and George pointed out that in the Victorian heyday of Toy Theatre production they were marketed as toys for the boys and this trend has persisted to the present day. Alain organised all our hotels and restaurants and he and his team made everyone feel thoroughly welcome. He hopes to perform his show in London and Norwich some time this year. You will find no greater champion or passionate advocate of the joys of Toy Theatre production.

Cose italiane

The autumn colours in Paris were Italian in hue, with Giambattista Tiepolo and Lorenzo Lotto at the Petit Palais and Grand Palais and Tintoretto at the 5th District Mairie. It is well known that both Giambattista Tiepolo and his son, Giandomenico, were attracted by Pulcinella (see John Blundall's article in *Bulletin* No 93). The Tiepolo exhibition (22

October 1998 – 24 January 1999) included his “La Cuisine de Polichinelle,” which is not, I imagine, a canvas unfamiliar to puppeteers – at least in reproduction. Executed between 1765 and 1770, the medium-sized oil (1.04m by 1.65m), shows a group of Pulcinellas – humps, white suits, tall hats, and half-masks – standing or sitting in a relaxed manner around a steaming pot. On the last Friday of the carnival in Venice it was the custom for Pulcinellas to prepare *gnocchi* (dumplings) for passers-by. However, it was the first time I realized that this painting was a British resident. Leeds Castle (open throughout the year) tells me that the painting should be back in the Yellow Drawing Room there by the time you read this piece. So when next in Maidstone, Kent....

Pulcinella also appears in the mysterious *Scherzi di Fantasia* engravings. What is the creature in the foreground of “The Discovery of Pulcinella’s Tomb”?

The Théâtre du Rond Point (Champs-Élysée) will be presenting a *commedia dell’arte* programme 2-26 June, which will include a *Pulcinella* taken from a Roberto Rossellini film, directed by Maurizio Scaparro, with 18th-century Neapolitan music.

It is no disrespect to local puppeteers that you do not go to Florence primarily to see puppetry. However, it was my intention in February to visit Pupi di Stac (who were at Charleville in 1994 and 1997) and see one of their traditional Tuscan glove-puppet plays. However, lack of a sense of direction and an adequate map denied me the realization of this at the end of a long walk. The theatre is on the outskirts of the city, at No 8 via Madonna delle Grazie. Take a taxi, bus, or – better still – ring beforehand (55 697662).

All I can think of to make up for the lack of a report is to quote a vignette by a distinguished early 19th-century visitor to the city on the Arno, Stendhal (Henri Beyle).

“Stendhal’s jeweller friend [Nathan, from the Ponte Vecchio] later introduced him ‘into

the society of a group of wealthy merchants and their wives’, so that he could watch a marionette show. Measuring no more than five feet across, the theatre was an exact copy of La Scala in Milano.

‘There were tiny lamps proportionate to all the rest, and each change of set was carried out rapidly... I can conceive nothing more enchanting. A company of four-and-twenty marionettes, each eight inches tall, equipped with leaden legs and costing a *sequin* apiece, performed a delicious, if somewhat indelicate, comedy which proved to be an abridged version of Machiavelli’s *La Mandragola*. Subsequently, these same marionettes proceeded to dance a miniature ballet, with considerable style and elegance.’” (from Francis King’s *Florence: A Literary Companion*, John Murray). Out of curiosity, I looked at Didier Plassard’s wide-ranging anthology of writing on puppetry *Les Mains de lumière* (Institut International de la Marionnette, Charleville-Mézières, 1996) to see whether it included Stendhal. It does – from the same source – although the pages cited are devoted to the satirical antics of *fantoccini* in Rome.

I had chosen my hotel, the Hermitage, because it overlooked the Ponte Vecchio, flanked now, as then, with jewellers’ shops. Stendhal, however, lodged at the Hotel Porta Rossa, about 300 metres away, close to the Ponte Santa Trinita. I stayed there too on a previous trip and can recommend the hotel, which dates back to 1386, as a place of character.

In the last issue I mentioned the 17th-century Sicilian wax modeller Gaetano Zumbo, in particular, his “Plague Waxes.” These small-scale scenes – virtually the whole of his extant work – are housed in Florence’s Museo Zoologico “La Specola” as part of a fascinating if morbid collection of 1,400 extremely realistic wax pieces from the 18th and 19th centuries designed as a means of teaching anatomy without directly observing a corpse.

Czech Republic

A reminder that the Guild is very enterprisingly looking into the possibility of an eight-day trip to Prague, to take in the 3rd International Puppet Festival, 1-7 June. Hotel (b&b), flights, airport transfers and insurance look like coming to about £340 per person – which is very reasonable indeed. Please contact asap Steve Clarke, 12 Hillbarn Lane, Worthing, West Sussex BN14 9QB (tel 01903 206854).

There is a web page (<http://uts.cc.utexas.edu/divadlo/indexs&h.html>) devoted to Skupa's Theatre of Spejbl & Hurvínek. It

has been created by researcher Amy Drizhal, who is collecting information for a thesis which concerns the history of the theatre, and she is looking for personal reflections. If you have a reminiscence or a story through having seen the company (Skupa himself made a couple of post-war visits here, I know), you can contact her via email from the site or at the University of Texas, Austin College of

Fine Arts, Dept of Theatre and Dance.

Your editor would be grateful to any kind soul who could supply him with slides of Czech puppetry and/or Czech puppet(s) for a talk towards the end of June. Postage and insurance would, of course, be taken in hand.

Belgium

Four pages of our Belgian colleagues' annual review are given over to Edmond Debouny's amusing, bemused write-up of last year's Belgo-British Festival ("Un chaleureux jumelage au pays de l'étrange! (Mai 1998)". I was pleased to hear from Georges Vettiers that his boisterous tchantchès show at The Little Angel was seen by someone who told someone who has invited Georges to

perform at the Seattle Puppet Festival this August, which should, incidentally, also have a good British representation.

Readers will be familiar with the Beresfords' link with Belgium. I have just been apprised of an article by Marc Jacobs detailing this which appeared in the *Oost-Vlaamse Zanten* LXXII 1997-2. The original article and/or translation "Puppet Making in Flanders in the Nineties: The contribution of Ted and Kath Beresford" is available on request.

An informative piece by Clare Thomson on the Gille tradition in Binche, Wallonia, appeared in *The Independent*, 6 2 99. The Carnival and Mask Museum there (10 Rue Saint-Moustier; tel 0032 64 335741) is said to have the largest collection of masks in the world.

Follow-Ups

I have received the programme of last November's Karagöz festival in Bursa, which is an annual event. A photocopy of it is available on request.

A short obituary of Li Tien-lu appeared in *Le Monde* (1 10 98). It states, among other things, that he knew 400 plays by heart.

Electronic Coordinates

The Puppetry Museum of the Netherlands:

<http://www.poppenspelmuseum.nl>

E-mail: info@poppenspelmuseum.nl

Rose Sage site: <http://www.stanford.edu/~rosesage/>

Punch Page: <http://www.zapcom.net/~bcomings/html/punchpage.html>

New Zealand UNIMA is available at: postmaster@pinz.org.nz

It is maintained by Ramon Rivero, who writes "We are in the process of compiling a 1999 International Festivals list to be published on a web site (which we haven't defined yet, but we will let you know)."

If you have any such information please mail to the above.



The Australian Scene

Penny Francis

The beckoning of a number of Australian friends and relations – some known only as a signature on a card or a voice on the phone – not to mention my attraction to wide skies and gorgeous landscapes, drew me to the southern hemisphere last summer. (Last winter, over there.) It was not meant to be a busman's holiday, but I was surprised and, let's be honest, delighted to find so much puppetry in my path. Sydney was the first port of call, where the legendary shadow puppeteer Richard Bradshaw and his wife, Margaret Williams, welcomed, sheltered and entertained me. Margaret has been a tutor and researcher in theatre and puppet theatre at the University of New South Wales for many years, though she is now retiring from teaching, intending to do yet more research and publishing. Richard is an historian of puppetry too, and the Bradshaw home in Bowral, in the rolling open countryside not far from Sydney, contains enough for a respectable museum of books, images and figures.

One of the priorities of my visit was to see Richard perform again. It is years since he played in England (Wales has been luckier), and I am one of his most dedicated fans. Fortunately, he was in the middle of a very busy time (Book Week in the schools – yes, they have it too, and puppeteers are in demand for it, as they are here); and he had a booking in the Blue Mountains, what's more. The school was set in acres of fields and woodland, and as he set up I watched the kookaburras and the brilliant rosellas and other wondrous wildlife, many of them with little fear of a nearby human.

His show, a series of short songs and sketches, was as polished, original, varied and funny as I remembered it. He does it all, down to the live speaking and singing. Every line of the simple silhouettes is full

of character and wit, and they are operated with a precision and timing that make the work a perfect example of the art that conceals art.



The Sydney UNIMA members invited me to a dinner, a special pleasure, and I learned a little about their life and problems. They all seemed busy, either constructing shows or performing in venues miles and miles apart. Not unnaturally, they feel remote from the UNIMA activity at the centre of Europe, and complained of the lack of contact with Charleville. Sue Wallace of the Sydney Puppet Theatre has the dynamism and charm which builds UNIMA centres and events and raises funds – you need something special to keep a UNIMA focus in such a vast continent. Imagine having one UNIMA centre for an area the size of Europe!

Puppetry in Australia, I soon discovered, almost replicates its situation in Britain. There are many puppeteers, most of them struggling to survive with little or no Arts Council attention or help; some find television work, though there is not as much as there is here; most play for children in schools, some for children with special needs; the staple fare is fairy and folk tales, and there is a handful of companies doing alternative work for adults. As under the Thatcher years in Britain, there is little official interest in the exchange of companies abroad or in supporting organizations like UNIMA.

One advantage of British puppeteers which has not yet come to those in Oz, is the great number of smaller theatres and arts centres here which regularly engage performances for children, creating a substantial amount of employment. However, there are a very few larger companies in Australia with their own building and subsidy, like Spare Parts in Fremantle, but even Spare Parts is threatened with demolition, although the

theatre will be incorporated in a new commercial development, it is said. The famous Marionette Theatre in Sydney's old Rocks area by the harbour is long gone, but there are hopes of another puppet theatre to replace it. Handspan continues to enjoy critical approval in Melbourne, as an innovative force.

I took a boat to cross the Bay to the home of another Sydney-based puppeteer. Jonquil Temple's Theatre Workshop is based in an attractive area, and she tours all over the country to bring puppetmaking and all-round performance workshops to children of every level of skill. She takes large masks and figures with her for demonstration and practice, the puppets often operated as fabric body-puppets that can fold into small spaces. Her enthusiasm and love for her job and the children she works with overflow from her. She struck me as something of an equivalent national treasure to our Violet Philpott, though younger. The two flowers, I thought, have much in common.

The next stop was Brisbane, where there was a prestigious children's festival called *Out of the Box* in the arts complex by the river, very like our South Bank Centre in London, but somewhat prettier. Serendipity continued with me: there were several puppet companies playing, and one was co-directed by Peter-Wilson-The-Dark, or Peter Pan Wilson, lately of Skylark Theatre in Tasmania. Skylark has run into a spot of bother, and is no more, but Peter is continuing his highly successful career as director of a new company, Skyworks, and his productions, well subsidized, have been touring at home and in the States.

At the Lyric Theatre in Brisbane he was co-director of *Twinkle Twinkle Little Fish*, a show that celebrated the illustrative and narrative talents of Eric Carle, author of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. It was a large-scale extravaganza for a proscenium theatre, full of colour, transformations and

special effects. Peter was programmed as "Image Director" and Simon Phillips as straight "Director," a nice distinction I haven't met before. I enjoyed it very much as popular entertainment, especially as there was some excellent manipulation of the various kinds of puppet, including a lot of ultra-violet work. I imagined the Image Director had a lot to do with that!

A few days later I was sitting in a plane taking me across the country to Perth and reading the in-flight magazine, when serendipity caught up with me again. I found myself staring at the picture of a puppeteer from France, Philippe Rodriguez-Jorda, an actor-puppeteer whose work I admire, once a student at the Institute in Charleville. He was to play in an alternative theatre festival, *Artrage*, full of mask and mime and puppetry, and he was performing with another of the Charleville alumni, an Australian called Joanne Foley, who has settled in Perth. She has called her company Foley Bergère, but also works with Spare Parts of Fremantle. It is difficult to introduce puppetry billed for adults in most countries, but in a small city like Perth Joanne Foley has a truly uphill struggle. However a festival like *Artrage* was a good context for her elegiac piece *The Call* (in France, *Le Grand Appel du Vide*), in which Foley and Rodriguez-Jorda operated two half-lifesize figures in the players' own likeness. A woman is working through painful memories and a wish to die, and uses the puppets to try and recreate her past. The piece was slow and melancholy, but artistically impressive in the performing and manipulative skills of the two protagonists.

Spare Parts was dark, sadly, but I looked around the theatre interior and found Ian Tregonning in the workshop, making beautiful sets and puppets for a new production. Noriko Nishimoto is the artistic director of Spare Parts, and is

engaging in some interesting partnerships with other theatre makers and with film and television, as well as presenting shows of quality to the Fremantle children.

Australia is not really far away, in any sense. It's worth going just for the puppetry, but you'll be glad you went for many other reasons, most of all the wildlife, the space, the long empty beaches, and the friendly faces everywhere. Greetings to everyone who welcomed me – and thanks to my faithful Serendipity.

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Media Watch

My understanding of the uses to which puppetry can be put was greatly extended by "The Limits of Endurance," the final programme (23 December) in David Attenborough's *The Life of Birds*, on BBC I. It showed young, parentless Whooping Cranes (an endangered species) being raised at the International Crane Foundation, Wisconsin, and featured what Attenborough described as, "one of the most extraordinary hand-rearing devices ever invented." The "operator," positioned on one side of a door with a hole in it, inserted through the gap his hand and arm on which was a lifelike bird's beak and long neck, and proceeded to feed the birds within the adjacent room. The same long sleeve puppet was donned when outside, in a field, the "operators," wearing white coats and beekeeper's helmets, ran and jumped to teach the birds to fly. It was a wonder the "whoopers" ever did learn to take off from such galumphing. In a parallel project, a farmer was shown flying a microlight followed by young cranes in preparation for leading them on migration (they would not otherwise know which

direction to take). The elaborate masquerade was necessary to "avoid humanizing problems." It was both amusing and touching. The only other similar occasion I have been so engaged was in watching that now-classic archive footage of the pioneer ethologist Konrad Lorenz conducting an "imprinting" experiment during which he was adopted by a brood of goslings, who followed "mother" everywhere – in water and on land.

An account of similar work with Blue Cranes in South Africa, including photographs of conservationists dressed up as cranes, appeared in *The Daily Telegraph* (12 2 99).

Douglas Hayward appeared on Collector's Lot (Channel 4, 11 11 98) talking about his collection in its new Shugborough home.

The much-acclaimed *Shockheaded Peter* returned to The Lyric, Hammersmith, on 17 February. The show, based on the Struwwelpeter stories of Heinrich Hoffmann, who was a doctor in an asylum, combines puppetry, toy-theatre effects, trick costumes, and fabulous wigs on a set that gives the illusion of a Victorian toy theatre, presided over by a sinister master of ceremonies. *The Guardian* (23 1 99) carries a page-long interview with Phelim McDermott, co-director, and Julian Crouch, co-designer and co-director, plus several members of the cast, including Martyn Jacques, falsetto and founder of the Tiger Lilies, and Graeme Gilmour, co-designer, puppet maker, and performer ("Part of the magic is that the puppets are so crap. It's like kids have made them. There's a naivety about them.").

Novyye Izvestiya (30 10 98) carried an item on its front page headlined "Theatres Are Still Being Built in Russia," which reads: "The construction of a new municipal puppet theatre has been completed in Yekaterinburg. A group of architects from the Urals Scientific Research Planning Institute led by Angelina Cheloguzova is responsible for the original design. The construction work was

completed in less than two years.” A photograph shows a large impressive-looking modern building. I have commented several times on the problem of funding for the arts in Russia, yet this piece of news may still seem not so noteworthy. However, put in context. Yekaterinburg (see Scholarships, p34) is in as parlous an economic state as anywhere: a chronic exodus of highly qualified scientists abroad; schools closed because they cannot afford to heat them and flats with a temperature of minus 8-10; a shortage of staple foods; wages paid in devalued rubles with months’ delay; and, as Yekaterinburg TV reported 25 November – and it is not untypical – a \$30-million cancer centre in the city has been *under construction for 10 years and is still unfinished*: the standard scandal of disappearing state money and conflicts among different companies and authorities.

The other day I saw a snatch of a Russian film version of Pinocchio or, to be more precise, Aleksey Tolstoy’s *The Adventures of Buratino*. Pinocchio was played by a young boy, and the whole affair was rather twee. That is the last thing Fellini’s abortive version would have been. Roberto Benigni, the star of the current, Oscar-nominated *Life is Beautiful*, who would have played Geppetto’s creation in the Fellini film, declared to an NFT audience on 7 November, during the London Film Festival, that “To me, Schopenhauer is like Pinocchio.” However, before worrying one’s head overmuch over the precise relationship of Pinocchio to the 19th-century German philosopher, it is worth bearing in mind that the highly-expressive actor also said “Fellini was a mamma! He was a water melon!”

Ex-puppeteer Ron Mueck (see short reference in *Bulletin* No 98, p 25) did well at Saatchi’s Britpack art sale in December. Ron may still be a long way behind Damien (Hirst’s “The Lovers” realized £139,000), but “Big Baby 2” (estimated at £6,000-£10,000) fetched £41,000 on the day.

News from the States and Japan

Penny Francis informs us that Nancy Staub, the organizer of the 1980 world festival of puppetry in Washington DC, a stalwart of UNIMA who is knowledgeable in many aspects of oriental and African puppetry, being the consultant for the Museum collection of the Atlanta Puppetry Centre, as well as a valued correspondent on the American scene, has written as follows:

“I was thrilled to see the full-page coverage of puppetry as an art form in *The New York Times* on September 6 1998 in honour of the 4th biennial NY International Festival (run by the Jim Henson Foundation). The festival got two full pages the following Friday and many reviews throughout its three weeks. Of course Julie Taymor’s *The Lion King* and Basil Twist’s *Symphonie Fantastique* (over 100 sold-out performances and still running) have received extensive coverage in *The Times* as well. There have been or will shortly be puppet issues of *The Canadian Theatre Review* [No 95, Summer 1998], *The Drama Review*, and *The Asian Theatre Journal*. Julie Taymor graced the cover of *American Theatre* in September and Hanne Tierney’s version of *Blood Wedding* was reviewed in *Performing Arts Journal* No 60 (1998). There are now three volumes of *The Puppetry Yearbook* of academic papers, with a fourth planned for this year. Several writers are planning new general (popular) books on puppetry.”

Penny also informs us that “Sennosuke Takeda has sent a series of stunning photographs of his new Museum in Iida, built to house the whole collection of the Takeda marionettes, once one of Japan’s most famous touring companies. The Museum’s exterior and interior must be the most aesthetically pleasing ever to be dedicated to our art form. Takeda-san will run courses in puppetry at the Museum, wanting it to be a training centre especially for marionette making and manipulation.

"We congratulate him on his achievement. We are sure he already has visitors to this veritable temple for puppets from all over the world."

Penny herself, in addition to having acted as collaborating editor on Henryk Jurkowski's two-volume *A History of European Puppetry* and continuing to assist him with the *WEPA (World Encyclopedia of Puppetry Arts)*, has also written for the latest *Puck* (No 11) an article on Phelim McDermott and Julian Crouch, the English version of which is available from us (see also *Media Watch*).

Obituaries

Jerzy Grotowski, the radical theorist of the theatre who emphasized the psychophysical dimension of performance, died 14 January. His theories were set out in his book *Towards a Poor Theatre*, published in English in 1968, with a foreword by Peter Brook, who acknowledged the Pole's profound influence on his work (see obituary in *The Times*, 20 January). The great scenographer Jerzy Zitzman died 18 January. He was the director of the Bielsko-Biała festival and permanent theatre for many years. A play he designed which was directed by the French metteur en scène François Lazaro had some success at the Edinburgh Festival a couple of years ago. Jacques Lecoq, the highly influential master and teacher of mime and mask theatre, died one day later. Mark Pitman, the Norwich-based puppeteer, who also teaches mask and puppetry at Central, was a pupil; the London-based Theatre de Complicite is much influenced by Lecoq (see obituaries in *The Guardian* 23 January; *The Independent*, 28 January (John Calder)). Kathleen Basford, whose researches into the mythic foliate figure the Green Man resulted in a book of that same name in 1978, died 20 December.

We have just learned of the death of Christine Glanville (28 February), who,

among other things, was Gerry Anderson's chief puppeteer. Full appreciations will appear in the next issue of *Animations* and *The Puppetmaster*.



Our Belgian "twins" bade farewell to John Phillips in their publication *D'un castelet à l'autre*, No 117. Georges Veters and Patricia Plumacker joined the throng of John's friends and family at the thanksgiving service held on 14 November at St Paul's Church, Covent Garden, and the reception at the CAA afterwards, where, along with puppets from St Antony, we were also able to see photographs of John, some showing the "then-lean and seductive Phillips, in natty hipster flares," whom most of us did not know. *Artists Notes/19* Winter 1998/1999, the publication of The Arts Council of Wales, emphasizes John's Welsh roots in its appreciation of his life and is appropriately written in both the Cymric and English tongues.



Drawing by Sue Furse of head of James Ensor carved by John Phillips for *Fridolin Unmasked – an incident in the life of James Ensor*, a play for marionettes by John Furse.

Cribs

Under the heading *Nativity play*, in his indispensable *Dictionary of Puppetry*, AR Philpott writes: "In his *Bench Book*, H.W. Whanslaw mentions a play having 15 to 20 group scenes, presenting biblical scenes, preserved in the Museum at Verviers, Belgium, the puppets being converted from ordinary dolls." Belgian UNIMA's latest annual publication *Marionnettes en castelet*, No 28, carries an illustrated article "Voici le Bethléem vervietoï," which describes a recent performance of a nativity play at the Musée de l'archéologie et du folklore de Verviers.

"The crib-makers of Naples have raised ecclesiastical eyebrows by creating figures of President Clinton and Monica Lewinsky to place alongside the Wise Men and the shepherds, and also one of the Virgin Mary giving birth." For more on the activities of Giuseppe Ferrigno, whose family has been making cribs in Naples since 1836, see *The Times*, 9 12 98.

A more traditional approach is adopted by Jaroslav Benda, a farmer from the Czech Republic, who has been carving crib figures for most of his 61 years, producing 897 very nicely executed figurines. He was forced to work under cover of night during the Communist period for fear of imprisonment. The country has in fact the highest proportion of nonbelievers in Europe. However, Mr Benda appropriately creates his "betlém" in the tiny village of Jerusalem, named by missionaries after it was converted to Christianity. Nazareth lies five miles up the road. (See *The Guardian*, 24 12 98, for more.)

Franciszka Themerson

Franciszka Themerson (1907-1988) worked, along with her husband, Stefan, in a number of media (for details see article in *Bulletin* No 84), which was well represented in three evenings devoted to them at the French Institute a couple of

years ago. An exhibition "Why is the mind in the head?" (the title taken from a 1954 oil on canvas) was the latest opportunity (13 January-11 February 1999) to see her drawings and paintings. A book entitled *Music*, with 96 pages of black and white drawings of musicians, has also just come out. It is available for £10, including p&p, from Art First, first floor, 9 Cork St. London W1X 1PD or from the Themerson Archive, 12 Belsize Park Gardens, London NW3 4LD.

I received the following lines from John Furse:

"'Why is the mind in the head?' asks Franciszka Themerson - what can we say to that? The mistress of the graphic one-liner surely knows the answer. Tart Thurber perhaps but something just a little bit more. The instinctive elegance - doodle plus - is beguiling.

"Franciszka and Stefan were wonderful hosts - wonderful company. Stefan's tales of times with Kurt Schwitters - *Kurt Schwitters in England* is a most delightful book - never ceased to astound. I have personal recollections of the afternoon when John Phillips and I succumbed to the offer of that little something extra after lunch.

My recollections are somewhat vague. It was the Brandy that did it."



Drawing from
Themerson Music,
published by the
Themerson estate,
1998.

Byte Parts

It was interesting to read Matthew Sweet arguing (*The Independent*, 28 1 99) that CGI (computer-generated image) is still unconvincing and that digital technology will never completely replace physical-effects techniques. Indeed, the rubber puppet dinosaur is, it seems, due for a comeback. He cites Heather Kenyon, editor-in-chief of the Hollywood-based industry journal *Animation Worldwide Network*: "The smart people have realised that models have a warm organic quality that CGI can't replicate." Must admit I can warm to old King Kong in a way that I do not to the recent Godzilla. Let me quote the original (1928) Kong's screaming blonde co-star, Fay Wray (from a page-long interview in *The Guardian*, 5 11 98): "Cooper [Meriem C Cooper, co-director] showed me some alarming drawings of this great monster climbing the side of a skyscraper, but reassured me that Kong was only 18" tall and that it was all done by animation. It's a huge achievement how much feeling they got into that animation. The final scene is really moving, where Kong is shot as he stands on the Empire State Building, and clutches his breast, but then stretches out his hand to where I am. A great piece of acting from that little fellow."

In the CGI camp, though, the 30-strong Pepper's Ghost Productions (a venerable name in the art of illusion) has been set up in Kingston to take on the Hollywood makers of *Toy Story*, *Antz*, and *A Bug's Life*. (See *The Independent*, 7 12 98, for details.)

Channel 4's Dope Sheet (late on Tuesdays) has been of consistently high quality. I particularly liked the Yuri Norstein edition (15 12 98). His work is a long time in progress – the conditions for small studios are difficult – but the results, as in the *Greatcoat*, are extraordinary. Another edition (19 1 99) conducted a poll to find the world's top animators: Park and Švankmajer were, I'm certain, first and second; Norstein came third, as I recall. Polls can be fatuous,

but this one had the advantage of being conducted among a peer group of renowned fellow-animators.

Very useful background on the BBC's *The Canterbury Tales* can be found in an article in *The Guardian*, 19 12 98, by Jonathan Myerson (who wrote the script) and an article in *The Independent on Sunday*, 20 12 98, by Robin Buss (also on the inside track, his wife being a Russian interpreter who has been involved in the cooperative projects with Russian animators since their *Animated Shakespeare* beginnings 10 years ago). The pilgrimage, which links the tales, is stop-motion animation with latex figures (about 10" tall), for which Aida Zyablikova in Moscow was responsible; while the tales themselves are mainly two-dimensional cel animation. The animators' styles varied widely: *Nun's Priests' Tale* (Dave Antrobus), the *Knight's Tale* (Antrobus and Mic Graves), the *Wife of Bath's Tale* (Joanna Quinn), the *Merchant's Tale* (Valeri Ugarov), the *Pardoner's Tale* (Sergei Olifrienko), and the *Franklin's Tale* (Damian Gascoigne).

The tales were enterprisingly broadcast in contemporary and Middle English versions. Myerson says "my intention has always been to bring the dialogue up to date," but advises that you "stick with the Middle for as long as possible. It's real, it's chewy and honest, and above all it's English. And you might start to feel that, on the edge of the millennium, 600 years isn't such a long time."

Soyuzmultfilm, set up in the USSR in the mid-thirties, has now almost entirely given way to the private enterprise company Christmas Films. *Beowulf*, directed by Yuri Kulakov, was also a Christmas treat from Russia (BBC 2, 23 12 98).

Bulgakov's masterpiece, *The Master and Margarita*, one of my favourite novels, is going to be made as a full-length (104 minutes) animated cartoon, which should appear in 2000 (the 60th anniversary of the novel's appearance). Given the rather inadequate screen version made of it a few

years ago, it is good to know that Marietta Chudakova, president of the Mikhail Bulgakov Fund, is chief consultant on the new film (see ITAR-TASS agency report, 22 12 98, for more details).

The holiday season, as usual, saw a lot of animation on the little screen, from the charmingly traditional appearance of *Petrushka*, directed and directed by Alan Platt (C4, 28 12 98) to the off-beat, pastry-cutter look of Aardman's *Rex the Runt*. I particularly enjoyed the penultimate episode (on New Year's Day) thanks in no small part to the voices of Bob Monkhouse and Professor Stanley Unwin. Wallace does make an appearance in the dog show, demonstrating that animation can be intertextual. Also liked the episode of Bugs Bunny "Produced, directed and plagiarized by Tex Avery."

I shall pass over in silence DreamWorks' *The Prince of Egypt* (though Gilbert Adair thought it "The dumbest story ever told") because I have not seen it, and Disney's recall – at huge expense – of 3.4 million copies of *The Rescuers* because there is nothing to see. The official explanation is that it contains "two frames with an objectionable background." But then I don't play records backwards either.

Festivals

Moving Parts 1999, Huddersfield's festival of puppetry and animation, stages its main events 7-11 April. See enclosed leaflet.

Blackpool mounts *Puppet Up! 99* 7-16 May, which will feature Philippe Genty on the 15th. We should also like to mention the exhibition (at the Grundy Gallery as of 13 March) of the Delvaine Marionettes, which toured the world in the 19th century. A full page is devoted to the festival in the February-March issue of *Animations* and further details are available from the Festival Office on 01253 292 486.

Streets Ahead, Greater Manchester's free festival of major foreign and many British-

based puppetry companies, takes place in May. This will include Amoros et Augustin from France with "Latest news of the Bounty," an outdoor shadow performance with an enormous screen and stage (Castlefield Arena, Manchester, 10pm 21, 22 May). The results are said to be "breathtaking," and if you have seen their other shows you will believe this. Big Nazo comes from the United States with a large-scale version of Spitting Image-type puppets; France's Utopium brings fairy tales with a sting in the tail; compatriots Zanimos present a "delightful animated fruit and vegetable market stall"; while Spain's La Fanfarra has a new solo show. For details telephone 0161 224 0020.

Harrogate: The Punch and Judy Fellowship, in conjunction with Harrogate Borough Council, is presenting a Punch and Judy Festival in the recently-restored 1930s Sun Pavilion in Harrogate and the surrounding Valley Park. Dates are 17 and 18 April. Ten professors are scheduled to perform shows from 10-4 pm each day. There is also a shadow show, *The Three Golden Hairs*, by Ruffege (Mark Dobson and Helen Fry). There will be an exhibition of Punch memorabilia, which will include a special feature of bygone Harrogate Professors Candler and Bailey. There will be a talk on the history of Punch and a children's puppetmaking workshop.

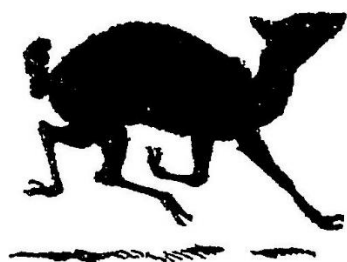
Refreshments will be available during the day and you will be able to purchase Punch and Judy souvenirs etc. Bottling may well be the only income for those taking part, as no funding is available at present. All BrUNIMA members and friends are invited, and any puppeteer interested in presenting shows at the festival should contact Des (the Pres) Turner, Richmond House, 2 Benington Rd, Aston, Stevenage SG2 7DX; tel: 01438 880376.

This is, I know, the PJF's first excursion outside of London for a while. It looks a very good event.

The Canadian marionettist Ronnie Burkett, following his recent appearance at the Green Room, Manchester, will be presenting *Tinka's New Dress* at the Barbican Centre 23 June-10 July (see article in *Canadian Theatre Review*, Summer 1998).

A performance of *wayang kancil*, a modern form with roots in traditional shadow puppetry styles, will take place on the afternoon of 13 June at South Weald Country Park, just outside Brentwood, Essex (M25, J28). The performance, part of a fundraising event for the park, will be accompanied by the Golden Deer gamelan, *Kidang Kencana*.

This form of *wayang kancil* was developed in the 1980s by Ki Ledjar Subroto, a Yogyakarta-based puppetmaker and puppeteer, as an "environmentally sound" wayang primarily aimed at a young audience. The performances use the well-



known Indonesian fables of Kancil, the ingenious mouse deer, as a vehicle for environmental/social education.

Details of exact time and location have yet to be finalized. These will be forthcoming in the next *Newsletter*, or alternatively contact Sarah Bilby, Golden Deer Shadow Theatre (tel: 01708 454955/766005; email: sarah@goldendeer.demon.co.uk).

Millennium News

PuppetLink, the consortium of five small puppet companies in the Midlands, has been awarded funding by the Millennium Festival of England for an event called *The Great Midlands Millennium Puppet Party*. The event is to be a festival of traditional puppetry harnessing the popularity of Mr Punch and his international clan of rowdy relatives and celebrating the heritage of folk and street puppetry. It will take place in May 2000 at a number of sites in the

Midlands, including MAC, the Museum of Cannock Chase, and in Kidderminster (which is twinned with Husum in Germany, where a regular major festival takes place).

Corrections and Clarifications

Overcompression may have suggested that the Jomon exhibition was just figures; there were in fact more pots than figures, with some ornaments, and a few masks. The formal deformity, symbolizing particular expressions, of the Jomon masks, the oldest dating from around 1,500 BC, lives on in *bugaku*.

The spelling Li Tien-lu is preferable to Lee Tien-lu, both were used in the last *Bulletin*, the latter by your editor (*mea culpa*). The Chinese of Taiwan have stuck to the Wade-Giles romanization system, the People's Republic of China uses *pinyin*, according to which the spelling of the above name would seem to be Li Tian-lu (at least that is what is given in brackets as an alternative after Li Tien-lu in the chapter on Hou Hsiao-hsien in Kwok-kan Tam and Wimal Dissanayake's *New Chinese Cinema*, OUP, though I thought *pinyin* did not use hyphens). To complicate matters further – in Southeast Asia, Chinese names are spelt according to dialectal pronunciation. Why make such a fuss? Simply to make a point and a plea to contributors to check the spelling of names in their copy. It is polite to get people's names right, but it is very difficult, sometimes impossible in fact, to establish the correct form, as well as being time consuming, at the editorial stage. Sometimes you will notice real, other times apparent, inconsistencies: for example, *dhalang* represents a rendering of Javanese, while *dalang* is what one would use in Indonesian or Sundanese; some cited names represent preorthographic reform in Indonesian, others come after it. We do our best, but stand to be corrected, and welcome your comments *across the board*.

Rise Phoenix's address is Perren, not Perrin, St.

Housekeeping

The deadline for the next *Bulletin* is 1 June; the deadline for the *Newsletter* is 1 April. Please remember to include programmes and the like with any articles submitted, as this provides useful information and possible illustrations. Such material will, of course, be returned.

The editor's email address has changed yet again (see end page), though you will still get through on the old one for a while.

Europe Commission: International Festival Scholarships

The Europe Commission, in collaboration with certain international puppets festivals, offers scholarships for UNIMA members – see back page.

These scholarships cover lodging, food, and free entry to the shows.

Members interested in attending these festivals must send their applications to:

Alberto Cebreiro, Europe Commission International UNIMA, Ronda del Port, 5-7a 46128 – Alboraya (Valencia), Spain. Fax: 34-6-3555137; email: alberto.ce@teleline.es
The application must contain the following information:

name and surnames; date of birth; address; telephone / fax.

Proof of membership of your UNIMA national centre, ie photocopy of membership card – this is essential to begin processing.

Your relationship to puppet theatre (professional, amateur, educational, research etc).

Name of the institution, group, or theatre in which you work.

You can indicate by order of priority up to five festivals that you would like to attend.

All applications that meet these requirements will be accepted. If the quota is filled a waiting list will be opened and you will be informed in due course.

These scholarships are addressed to UNIMA members who are unable, for various reasons, to attend international festivals. These scholarships are to attend as observers

and not with performances

These scholarships are granted by strict date of application. There is no selection.

Once the scholarship has been granted and accepted, the beneficiary assumes a serious and formal commitment. Only if very serious and justified reasons are forthcoming can the beneficiary relinquish the scholarship. In which case s/he should inform the Commission as soon as possible so that it may be granted to someone else.

Once the scholarship has been used the Europe Commission should be sent a report on the festival attended covering the organization of the festival, the performances, and areas for consideration and improvement.

BrUNIMA members were quick to take up scholarships: these have included Diana Bayliss, Robert Frith, Rachel Riggs, Helen Fry, Stephen Sharples and Michelle Quick. The latter two kindly sent in reports to us, which, as they covered the same ground, have been compressed and combined, employing "we" rather than "I." without, it is hoped, distorting opinion.

Treasure Trove on the Alicante Festival

Stephen Sharples and Michelle Quick

When we saw that the UNIMA Europe Commission was offering scholarships we circled the two festivals that most appealed and fitted in with our work schedule and sent off our applications. Three months later came the reply informing us that our request to attend the 11th Festival Internacional de Titeres in Alicante, Spain, had been accepted. We arrived on 3 December and left on 10 December. Although the festival was for 10 days, festival funds did not run to cover the full period. This was a great pity because it meant we missed the State Theatre of Nizhniy Novgorod, which was to perform in the Teatro Principal, usually reserved for opera and ballet. It was to be the highlight of the festival, as Angel Casado, the artistic director of the festival explained as he took us around the theatre.

We enjoyed full board – breakfast in the hotel and vouchers for meals at the Casino – and a free pass to all the shows, which gave a wonderful sense of freedom.

All the venues (there were seven main ones, ranging from churches and parks to theatres) were easily reachable on foot, and we got a real feel for Alicante that way, enjoying exploring in Spain's warmer December climate the older part of the town and admiring the architecture of the buildings, which, although a bit crumbled in places, retain their unspoilt beauty.

The festival was well organized and publicized, which meant the general public and puppetry enthusiasts attended.

One of the first performances we saw was by the Freyer Theatre, from Ljubljana, which performed a Nativity, the design of which was based directly on frescoes from Istria, and cleverly concealed political and social messages about the unrest in former Yugoslavia, particularly Slovenia. The puppets, made from an interesting combination of carved wooden heads, cloth hands, and sculpted fabric, were performed in the cloisters of the Concatedral de San Nicolás. We wondered why Mary was dressed in brown rather than blue: One of the three performers told us that the cost of blue pigment was too expensive at the time the frescoes were painted (1470), and they wanted to keep the puppets as close to the original paintings as possible.

One of our favourite companies – seen three times in different venues – was De Trozos Títeres, with a captivating show centred on a fisherman, hence the title *Carlitos Pescador*. It was a booth-type show with two performers. We could picture this in Covent Garden or on the cabaret circuit quite easily.

Los Duendes, from Valencia, performed *La Bella Durmiente* (Sleeping Beauty). This played to a packed house at the Auditorio CAM, the muppet-type figures superbly operated by Alberto Cebreiro and his wife.

There were also beautifully crafted pieces like *The Happy Prince* by Els Aquilinos, from Catalunya, who created a magical world on stage. We particularly liked their use of scale, ranging from a miniature paper theatre which opened up from the floor (in contrast) to an enormous Prince. We were in awe as we watched the two performers manipulate the puppets and scenery with great skill – their acting was superb. The first half of *Los Bufos de la Matinée* by El Chonchon, from Argentina, which paid tribute to the lost days of silent cinema – Chaplin, Keaton, Laurel and Hardy – was great, but it then lost us. Tanti Così Progetti, from Italy, performed a grotesque muppet-type version of *The Three Little Pigs*, which had the audience enthralled: excellent voices and intriguing, mechanical staging. A sort of Faulty Optic meets the three little pigs.

Most of the companies had two-four operators, with the exception of Poland's Opolski Theatre and the 12-strong Russian company. Opolski was unable to perform *Pastoral* because the intended venue, a church, was undergoing major refurbishment. Its other show, *El Tigre Pedro*, done in West End musical style, was a favourite. Its six operators used 4ft-high rod puppets for characters reminiscent of Winnie the Pooh and Tigger – they were a little like stuffed toys with movement in their limbs and a short rod to their heads. The action was excellent, with the puppeteers, as well as the puppets themselves, taking on the characters. The stage was alive with puppetry and song and numerous scenes where Pedro has to show his bravery and earn his stripes. Although the festival was international (it was the 15th puppet festival held there, the 11th as an international event), it was a festival designed to be accessible to the local audiences – it was a big annual event in the community – with the majority of shows being in Spanish. We saw 20 performances of different types of puppetry – rod, glove, table-top, and mixed media – and seven exhibitions and met numerous puppeteers. We were very impressed by the high standard

of work and the ingenious, inspiring ideas. Some of the puppets and sets were works of art in their own right. It was an excellent festival and a great time was had.

The table below has been compiled – to the best of our ability – from information received, but *it is up to members to verify the data.*

AVAILABLE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR PERIOD 1999-2000

Country	City	Month	Annual Number	Total 1999/2000	Number Requested	Number Available
Argentina	Santa Fe	September 99 (biennial)	2	2	0	2
Belgium	Gent ¹	July	2	4	2 (1999)	2
Bulgaria	Varna ²	October 99 (triennial)	6	6	6	0
Croatia	Zagreb	Sept	2	4	0	4
Slovakia	Topol'čianky	3-5 Sept	2	4	1	3
	Banská Bystrica	14-19 Sept	2	4	0	4
Spain	Alicante	Dec	2	4	0	4
	Cuenca	May 99 (biennial)	2	2	0	2
	Lleida	May	2	4	1 (2000)	3
	Segovia	May	2	4	2 (1999)	2
	Seville	May	1	2	1 (1999)	1
	Tolosa	Nov	2	4	2 (1999)	2
France	Charleville	Sept 2000	5	5	5	0
Netherlands	Dordrecht	Jun	2	4	2 (1999)	2
Italy	Santelpidio	Jul	2	4	0	4
	Perugia	Aug-Sept	2	4	1 (1999)	3
Mexico	Mexico City	Jul	2	4	0	4
	Morelos	Mar	2	4	0	4
	Tlaxcala	Aug	2	4	1 (1999)	3
Poland	Opole	Oct 99 (biennial)	3	3	0	3
Portugal	Evora	May 99 (biennial)	2	2	2	0
Czech Republic	Prague	June	2	4	2 (99), 1 (00))	1
Russia	Yekaterinburg ³	Sep	2	4	0	4

¹ Gent requires that you participate in the organization work for five days before and after the festival.

² Scholarships will be extended a week subsequent to the festival to enable people to attend a course in the Varna Institute of Arts and to analyse the festival performances.

³ This festival pays the Moscow-Yekaterinburg leg of the trip.

The British Centre of Union Internationale de la Marionnette

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